

A Shared Heritage:

Urban and Rural Experience
on the Banks of the Potomac

A Field Guide for Alexandria, Virginia



Thirty-Ninth Annual
Vernacular Architecture Forum Conference

May 2-5, 2018

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*Cover photo: View of the rear yard of Gadsby's Tavern in the nineteenth century, showing early service buildings now lost.
Courtesy of Alexandria Public Library Special Collections.*

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A Very Brief Architectural History of Alexandria, Virginia

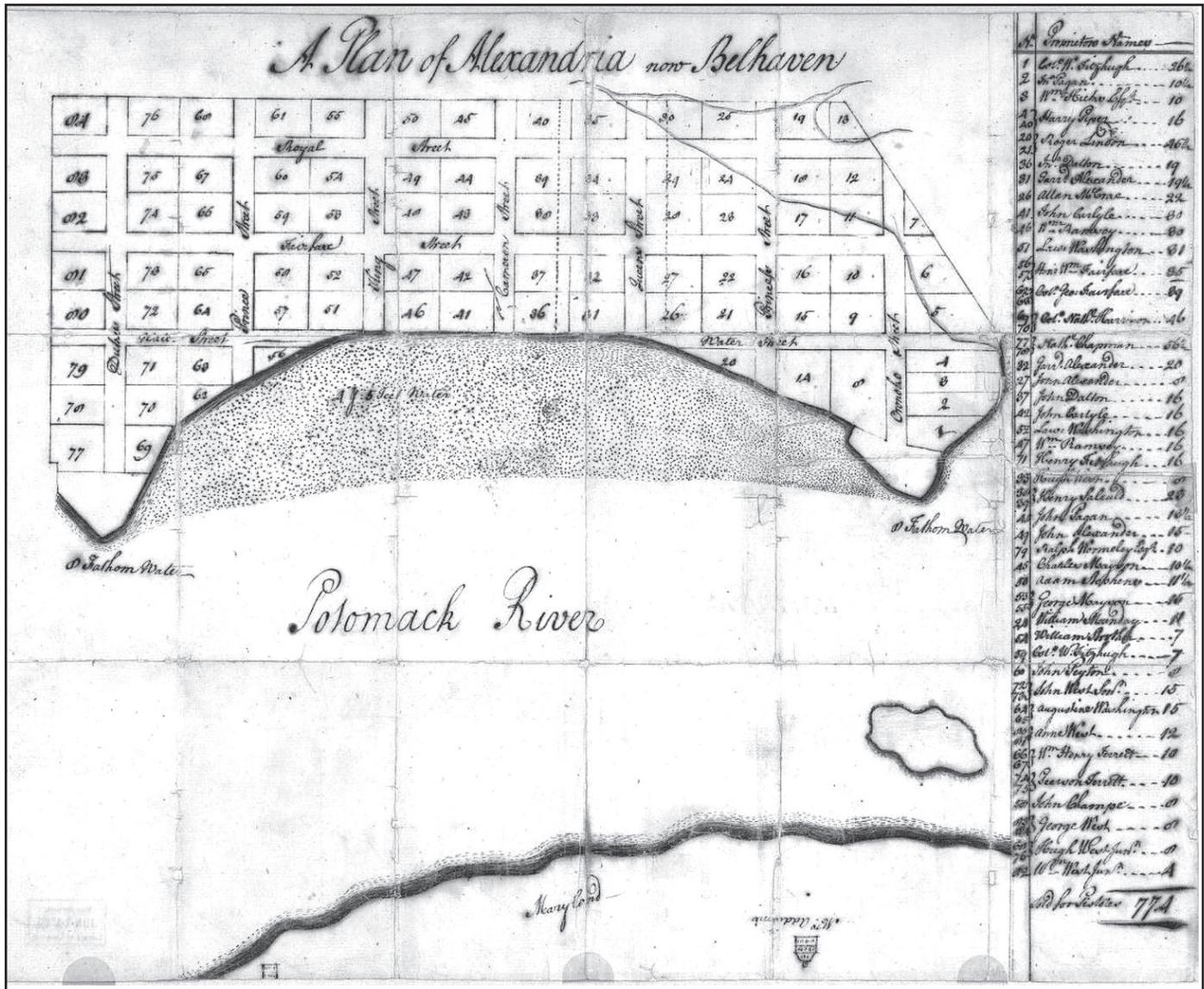
To insure the quality of tobacco being shipped to Europe, the Virginia legislature passed an act in 1730 requiring the construction of inspection warehouses. One such warehouse was built near Oronoco Bay, "the last and best Virginia anchorage for ocean vessels before the Potomac Falls." Georgetown, founded in 1751, is the corresponding fall-line city on the Maryland side.

Following an informal settlement of taverns and warehouses around the tobacco inspection warehouse, a group petitioned the Virginia Assembly in Williamsburg, and a charter was granted to create the town of Alexandria in May 1749. It was settled

predominantly by Quakers and Scots as a speculative, mercantile venture on 60 acres of land purchased from John West and the Alexander family on a sandy bluff overlooking a shallow bay in the Potomac River just south of the inspection warehouse at West's Point. The simple, orthogonal grid of 66 feet-wide streets east of what is now Pitt Street was established by the charter and surveyed originally by a young George Washington. Blocks were quartered into 84 ½ acre lots and sold at auction. This strictly utilitarian layout matched the grid plans of other fall-line towns in Virginia such as Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Dumfries and completely ignored the existing topography, with lots



Plat of the land where on stands the town of Alexandria. George Washington, 1748. Manuscript Map. Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress.



A plan of Alexandria, now Belhaven. George Washington, 1749. Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress.

extended out into the shallow marsh of the Potomac. The plan specified a court house and market on half of the central block of the grid but lacked the public alleys, open spaces, churches, or schools of the socially aspirational urban plans of Philadelphia, Savannah or Williamsburg. The grid was expanded to the west to Washington Street in 1762 and again in 1798 to West Street, by which time Alexandria was a part of the District of Columbia.

The original streets were all four rods (one rod = 16.5 feet), or 66 feet, wide. The primary east/west street was named for Cameron, Lord Fairfax, with feminine streets (Queen and Princess) to the north and masculine streets (King, Prince, Duke) to the south. Cameron Street was originally intended to be the

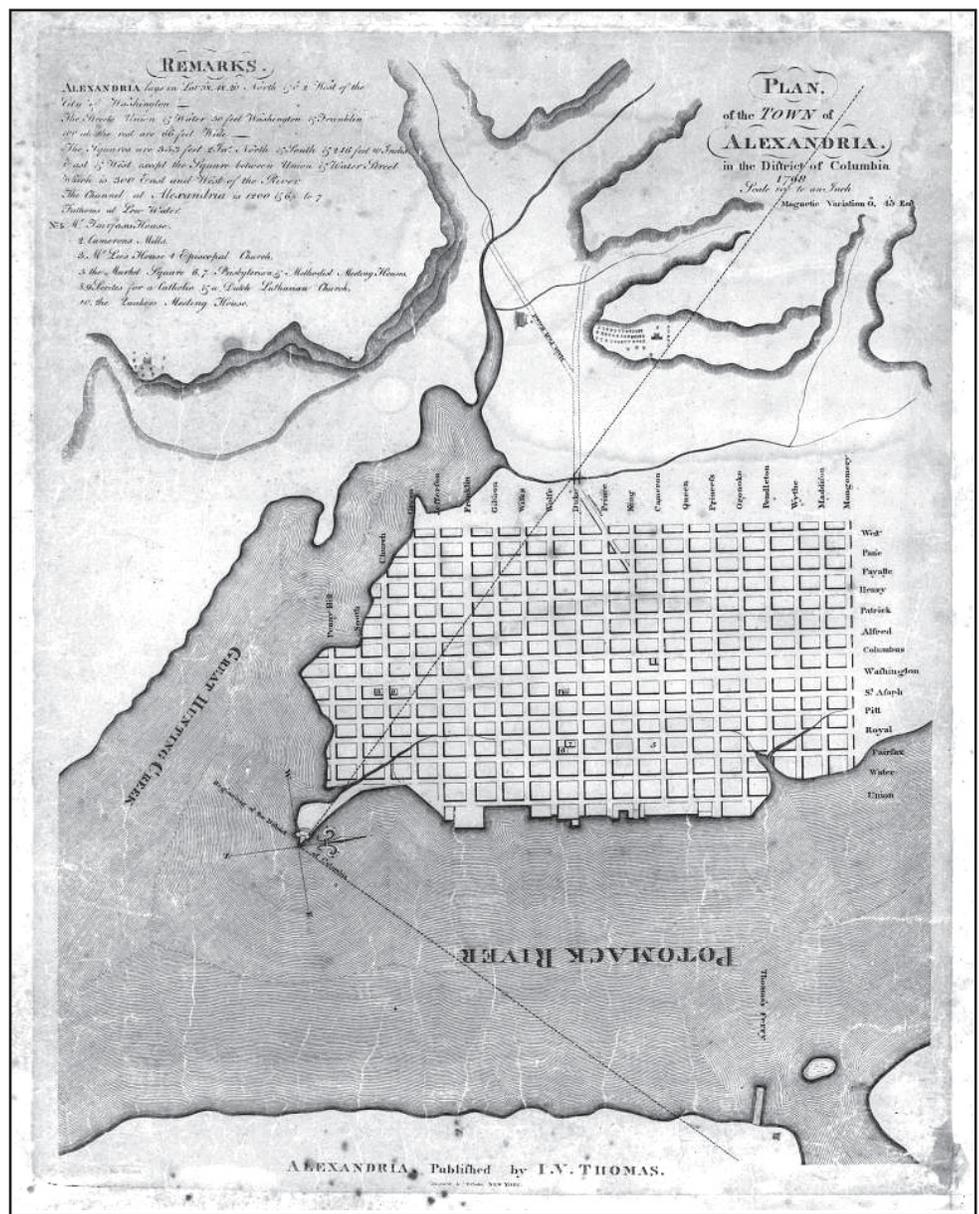
primary east/west street (which is why the City Hall faces north), but King evolved into the main commercial street. Lee Street was originally called Water Street, as it was situated at the top of the bluff overlooking the river. Washington Street is 100 feet wide and the primary north/south street. It became a part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway in 1932 on the bicentennial of his birth. The GW Parkway was one of the first scenic national parkways to be created in the US and the City's responsibility for protection of its "memorial character" under a 1929 agreement with the federal government was a major reason for creation of the Old and Historic Alexandria District in 1946. Alexandria was the third locally-regulated historic district created in the United States, following Charleston and New Orleans.

To avoid speculation, the original 11 town trustees prohibited the purchase of more than two lots, and owners were required to build on a lot within two years of purchase. Buildings were required to be constructed of brick, stone or wood, at least 20 feet square and nine feet in height, with a brick or stone chimney. A 1752 resolution by the trustees further required that "all dwelling houses ...be in line with the street as chief of the houses now are, and that no gable or end of such house be on or next to the street." This last requirement established that all roof ridges should run parallel with the street, to ensure that water did not drain onto a neighbor's property and cause damage. The chaste red brick architecture and townhouse streetscape of eighteenth-century Philadelphia generally appears to have been the model for Alexandria, which bears no resemblance to the Baroque plan of freestanding buildings constructed 50 years earlier in Williamsburg. The town's ordinances appear not to have been strictly enforced and were formally suspended at least once by the Virginia Assembly in 1779 due to "the scarcity and difficulty of procuring building materials" during the Revolution.

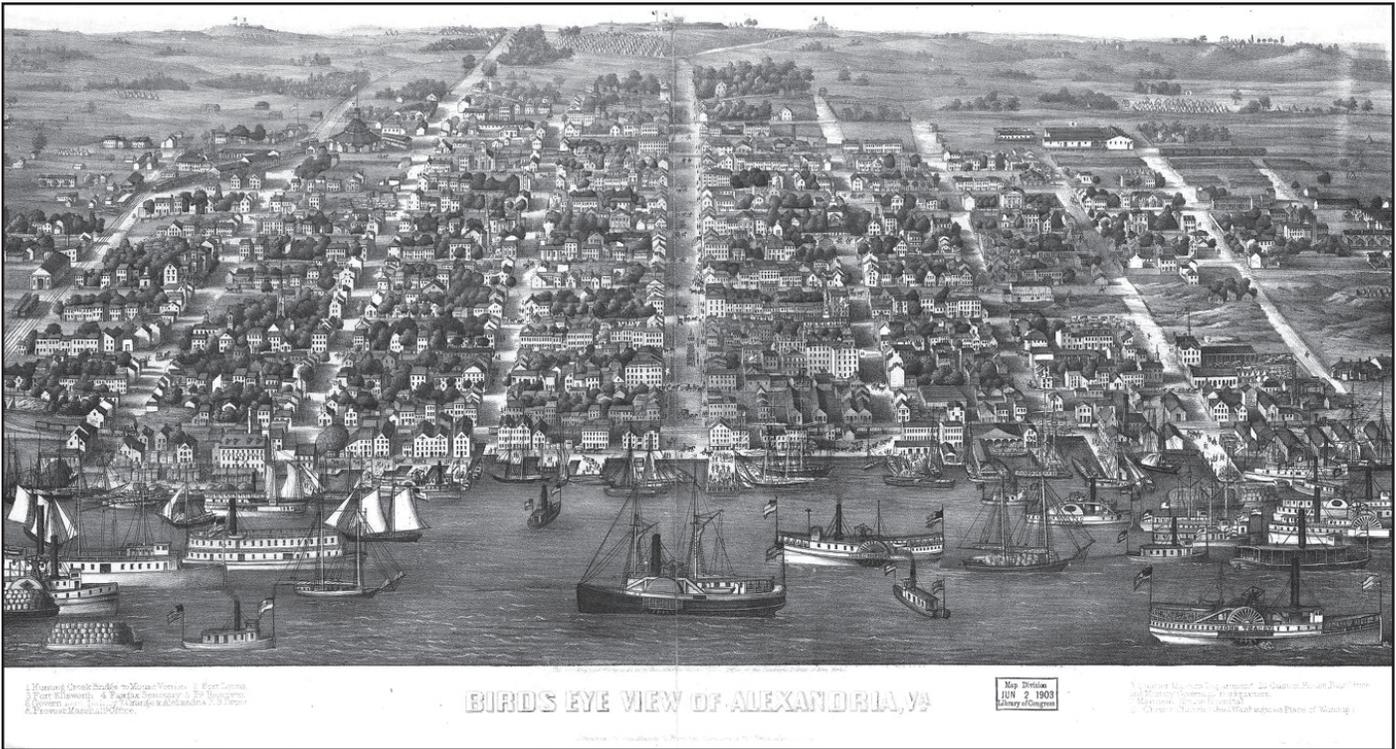
These regulations meant that Alexandria's early architectural expression during its first century may seem somewhat monotonous on the surface, with streetscapes filled with tidy brick structures punctured by the occasional frame building, but closer examination of details reveals the steady adaptation of new architectural idioms. This local fashion consciousness may not have kept pace with larger cities to the north, but it is there, and it intensified in the decade before the Civil War.

While the exteriors of buildings constructed by the Scot-

tish and Quaker settlers in Alexandria might have been subtle expressions of Georgian, Federal and Greek Revival detailing, the interiors could be quite elaborate with wood trim, ornamental plaster cornices and ceilings and richly-decorated mantels, frequently copied from architectural pattern books. Alexandria builders favored a local variant of the side-passage townhouse plan that placed a principal public space, in many cases a dining room, as the first room in the ell entered from the first floor of the main block. The plan appears in the eighteenth century and remains in use into the twentieth century. A good high-style example is seen at 209 South St. Asaph Street, but even in the modest 1 Muirs Court, which almost assuredly had



Plan of the town of Alexandria in the District of Columbia. George Gilpin, 1798. Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress.



Birds eye view of Alexandria, Va. Charles Magnus, 1863. Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress.

no dining room, the ell contains a substantial room with a smaller room behind.

Although the majority of the early houses were frame (a truth not reflected in surviving building stock), a substantial number of early houses in Alexandria were constructed of locally-made red brick, a fact commented upon in early visitor accounts. The brick fired in local wood-burning kilns used through the early-nineteenth century was soft and irregular in shape and color. It was laid in weather-struck mortar joints with visible oyster shells, tan sand and un-slaked chunks of white lime. Both the brick and the mortar were relatively weak and porous. The brick walls were frequently stained with a red oxide and linseed oil mixture to make them more water resistant and to hide variation in brick color. Careful observation will reveal that the mortar joints of a number of buildings still show evidence of being over-painted then picked out with thin lines of white paint to give the appearance of higher quality materials and workmanship. The front elevations of higher style houses in the eighteenth and especially the nineteenth centuries, often concentrated higher-quality materials and building practices on the principal elevations. Front walls were laid in Flemish bond with tooled, flush joints.

Side and rear elevations used coarser brick laid with weather-struck joints in English bond and later in common bond that increased from 3:1 to 5:1 to 7:1 as the decades of the nineteenth century rolled on. Production of more uniformly-sized brick allowed the use of commercially produced white lime putty in extremely-thin "butter joints," as typically seen on the front elevations of Greek Revival townhouses. By the early-twentieth century, Portland cement made header courses a decorative choice rather than a structural necessity, and running or American bond became commonplace.

Unlike most modern suburban buildings, which are designed in three dimensions as a freestanding sculptural object, historic buildings in Alexandria were very two dimensional and frontal, even on the corner of a block where two sides face a street. The brick buildings displayed the characteristic vibrancy of Georgian masonry with distinctive vertical sections separated by horizontal elements: a projecting brick basement with a water table often molded, walls featuring horizontal belt courses of brick or stone delineating floor levels, all topped by a pronounced cornice, early executed in wood, but more commonly in brick beginning in the late-eighteenth century. This dynamism disappears in the Federal

period, which ushered in planar facades in the early-nineteenth century. Window and door openings were standardly headed with flat jack arches up through the first decade of the nineteenth century, but straight wood or stone lintels become common after that. Lintels ornamented with bullseye corner blocks gave way to carved stone pediments and decorative cast iron in the vocabulary of the Greek Revival and Italianate styles. As glass manufacturing technology evolved from blown cylinder and crown glass to modern float glass, window pane sizes increased from the small 9/9 multi-pane windows seen on Christ Church to 4/4 sash and 2/2 in the decades after the Civil War and finally to large single pane sash at the end of the nineteenth century. Foundations were universally constructed of gneiss fieldstone until the 1820s, to prevent rising damp due to the wet soils below grade. Where these fieldstone foundations are exposed on early houses, it generally indicates that the street level was lowered. A public works projects in the 1790s graded streets toward the river and “banked in” or filled shallow marsh land extending the land toward the channel of the river.

Current, nationally-accepted preservation practice strongly encourages the retention of original materials or later elements which have acquired historic significance in their own right and show the evolution and patina of a structure. This was not always the case. The buildings in Old Town may be either Georgian or Federal structures which were enlarged and updated to current styles during the Victorian period, or they may be Victorian period buildings which were “Colonialized” during the patriotic fervor of the US Bicentennial in 1976. “Colonial” buildings, or at least buildings that appear stylistically to the casual observer to have been constructed prior to the Civil War, are highly favored by realtors. Door surrounds, windows, and siding were the easiest stylistic elements to update, but cornices and roof pitches were difficult to reach, more expensive to alter and will frequently suggest either an early

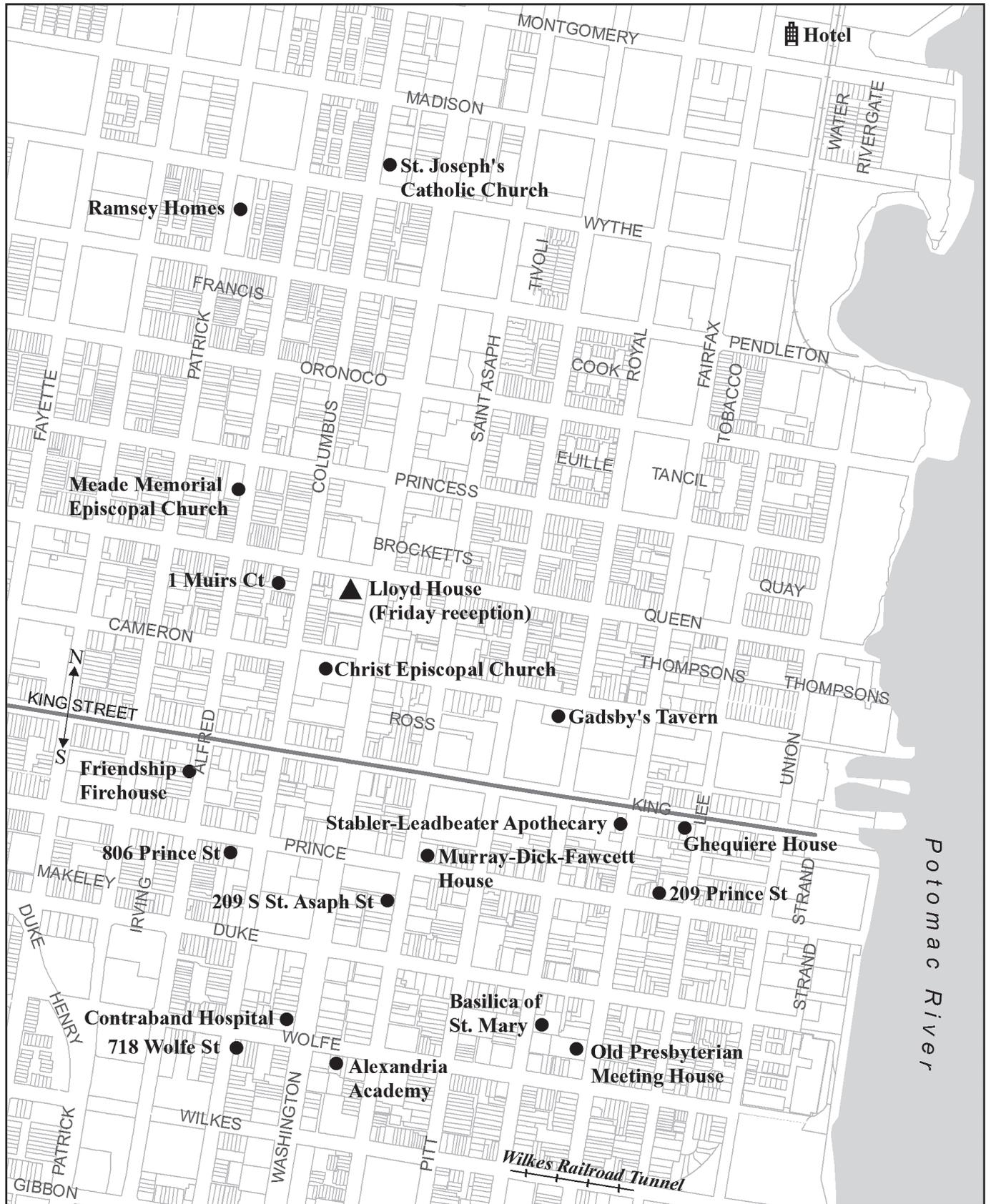
or late construction date. By Board of Architectural Review policy, these later architectural alterations are generally returned to the structure’s period of significance, based on physical or archival evidence, when remodeling is proposed.

According to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, alterations, additions and infill construction should be visually distinguishable from historic structures. However, the degree to which this new construction is evident is generally up to the local preservation review boards. Some communities accept, and even require, stark contrasts in style and material, which, when not done well, can overwhelm the original structure or its neighbors. Alexandria has taken a more conservative approach, wherein a scholar should be able to readily examine construction materials and details and see clear but subtle differences, but these differences should not be blatantly obvious to the casual observer.

As a result, some knowledge of the local history of building materials and technologies must be used to understand the evolution of a building in Alexandria. For instance, steeply pitched gable or hip roofs were needed to shed water from wood shingles during the Georgian and Federal periods. Low slope shed forms became the norm after metal roofing became commonly available here in the mid-nineteenth century and were first used on Greek Revival buildings. A shed roof which slopes two to three feet toward the rear of the structure is utilized on almost all Italianate and Second Empire row houses. Therefore, a Georgian style doorway and multi-pane windows on a townhouse with a rear sloping shed roof and Italianate cornice is what the Board of Architectural Review affectionately calls “Phony Colonial.”

The streetscapes of Alexandria thus provide a rich and varied backdrop for the lives of residents; ever old, ever new, but always engaging and beautiful.

Alexandria, Virginia



Alexandria Academy

604 Wolfe Street

1785, 1825, 1887, 1939, 1963, 1987

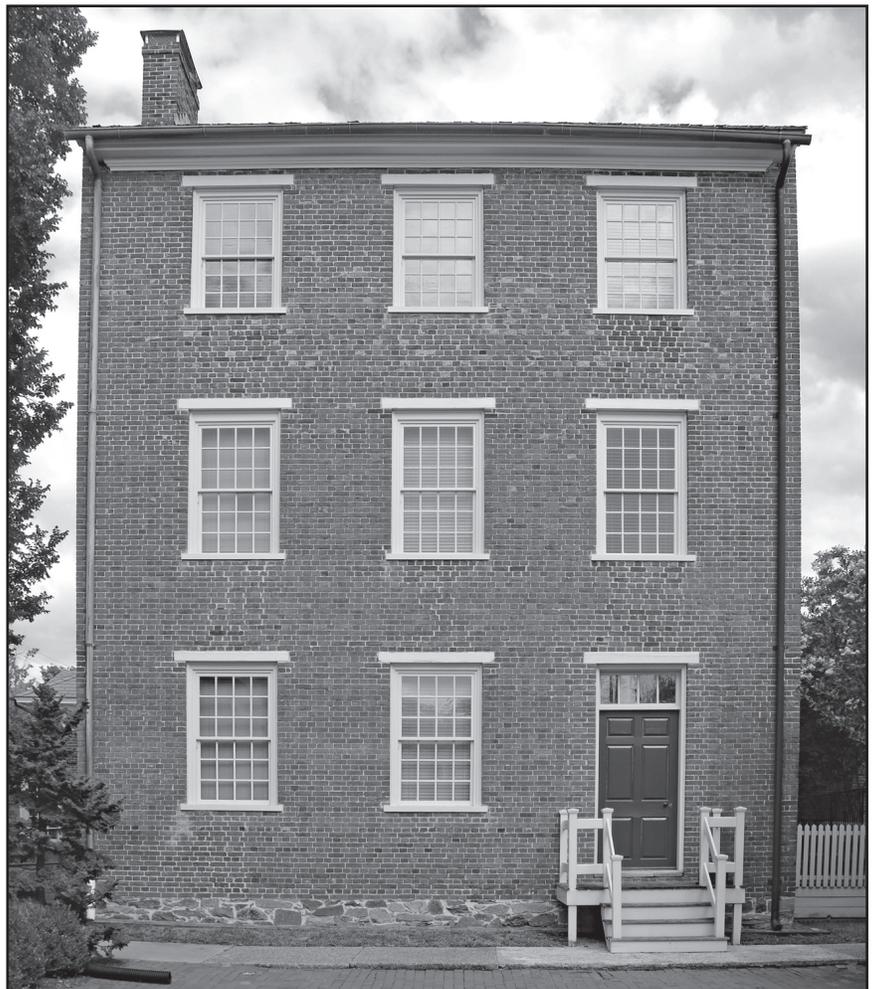
The Alexandria Academy, located at 604 Wolfe Street, appears to be an unassuming three-story, three-bay, single-pile brick building. This building, however, is remarkable as it interweaves the legacies of George Washington, public education and the adaptation of architecture in this port city. When the concept of public education was novel, the building was erected in 1785 to accommodate schooling for both tuition-paying students and poor or orphaned boys and girls who could not afford to pay for it. The first two floors were dedicated to paying students of grammar, writing, reading and arithmetic, while the third floor housed a free school, where the same subjects were studied. The school opened in January 1786 and was incorporated shortly thereafter. Not only was this institution notable for providing free education, but it was also notable because one of its sponsors was George Washington, who felt strongly that education contributed to the wellbeing of the country. Funding provided during Washington's lifetime and an endowment that survived after his death kept the school afloat for many years until it declined and ultimately failed in the early 1820s.

In 1823, the building was sold to a private individual, Samuel Arell Marsteller; from that point until the 1880s, it was maintained as a private residence. It was transferred to the Alexandria public school system in 1884, officially closing in 1967 and sitting unused for almost 30 years. An intervention by the Historic Alexandria Foundation saved the building from destruction, and it underwent a

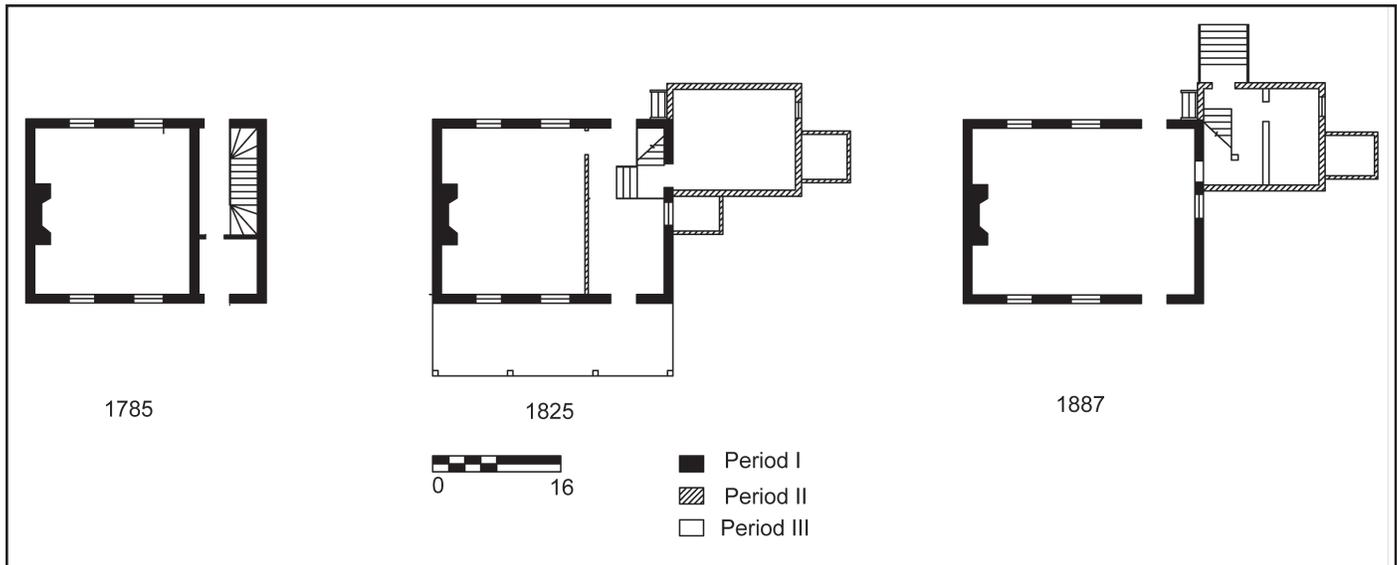
full-scale study and restoration in 1987 to return the building to its 1785 appearance.

The Alexandria Academy building was begun in September 1785 according to the following plan as detailed in June 1785:

"Towit, the house to be twenty three feet in breadth and thirty feet in length, one entry



Alexandria Academy. Front elevation of the Alexandria Academy. The exterior walls date to 1785, while the configuration of the window heads was a later alteration. Carl Lounsbury, 2017.



Alexandria Academy. Plan of the first floor in 1785, 1825 and 1887. Interior doorways not shown as their placement has not been determined with certainty. Drawings were developed as part of the 1987 restoration and were redrawn by Thomas A. Reinhart in 2018. Courtesy of Alexandria Public Library Special Collections.

and stairway to be taken off the south end, to be three stories high, first and second stories to be each ten feet high and the third story to be eight feet high. The whole house to be built of brick; also a necessary six by ten feet to be built of brick.”

Not noted in this order is the unusual use of the English bond for the entire height of the wall, the only structure in Alexandria to do so. The 23' x 30' footprint contained three floors of roughly the same plan. On each floor, there was a large, square classroom; to the south of each classroom was a brick partition wall separating it from an entry closet and stair. The entry may have served as office space for a teacher or closet space. The first two floors had 10-foot ceilings, and the third floor ended up with a nine-foot ceiling (per a September 1785 change request). The 6' by 10' necessary is no longer extant. The 1987 study concluded that the following elements survive from 1785: the exterior brick walls (except later openings), the roof framing, many of the floor joists (except the southern-most portions of the 2nd and 3rd floors), the exterior cornice, and some interior plaster (stair and 3rd floor). While the interior stair was later removed, the surviving interior plaster and framing evidence in the south wall indicate the location of the original stair and partition walls. Paint analysis on the exterior cornice indicates that it was initially painted white.

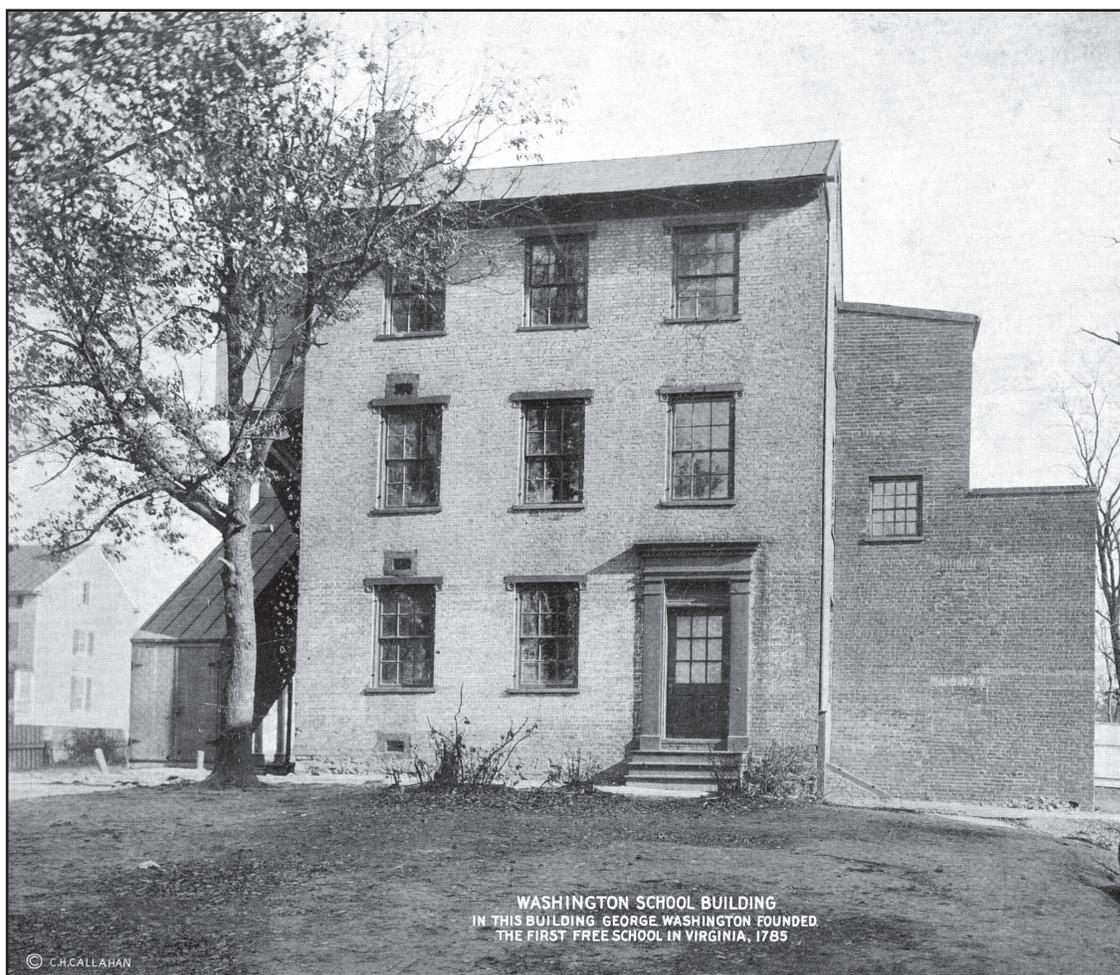
Since its initial construction, the building has undergone four distinct periods of alteration. Soon after the building was first sold in 1823, it underwent significant alterations to better accommodate its new and vastly different function as an upper-class home. Marsteller purchased the building in 1823, but his family did not move in until at least 1825, and the property's value jumped from \$790 to \$2,500 between those years. Physical evidence corroborates this extensive remodeling. Given its well-documented 1785 construction date, one would expect to see jack arches above the window openings, but the configuration of the window heads that is visible in early photos shows lintels supported by bullseye corner blocks, a configuration that is identical to the 1819 portion of the Stabler-Leadbeater apothecary. Additionally, all of the interior trim—window and door architraves, and window sashes—was updated in the early Greek style. Evidence shows that the partitions that separated the classrooms from the south end were removed, a new two-story addition was built off the south gable end, an attic loft was built, the stair was reconfigured and a porch was added on the west face. Much of the trim that dates to this period, including the decorative corner blocks on the exterior window and door architraves, still survives. Paint analysis suggests that the exterior cornice dates to 1785, as its first-generation paint differs from the earliest paint on the rest of the trim; a curious omission given such a thorough reworking.

After passing through the hands of several private owners in the late-nineteenth century, the property was conveyed to the Alexandria School Board, and it became a school once again by 1885. In 1887, it underwent further renovation, to better accommodate its renewed function. In this iteration, the 1823 stair and partitions were removed to create larger school rooms, and the south addition was altered to function as a stair tower. New doors were also opened up through the south gable wall to connect the stair tower with the mass of the building. Much of the 1823 trim remained in place. Still under school system ownership, the floors were replaced in 1939, and a one-story mechanical closet was added further to the southwest. The building was retrofitted in 1963, adding a plywood wall surface and a gypsum board ceiling. The building remained largely untouched from the 1960s until its 1987 restoration.

During the 1987 restoration, all of the post-eighteenth-century alterations were removed, including the various additions on the south end of the building. Because the 1785 exterior walls survived, the original exterior footprint remained intact. Further, because evidence for the original stair and entry closet locations also existed, these elements could be reconstructed with confidence. Paint analysis allowed for identification of a more appropriate exterior trim color. The restoration report did note that a better understanding of the building could be achieved from updated paint analysis, dendrochronology and physical investigation.

The Alexandria Academy building symbolizes both the origins of early public education, as well as George Washington's commitment to it, and is noteworthy as one of the few eighteenth-century school buildings to have survived in Virginia.

*Alexandria Academy.
Front elevation after
the 1825 and 1887
additions to the south
end of the building.
C.H. Callahan, after
1887. Courtesy of the
Alexandria Public
Library Special
Collections.*



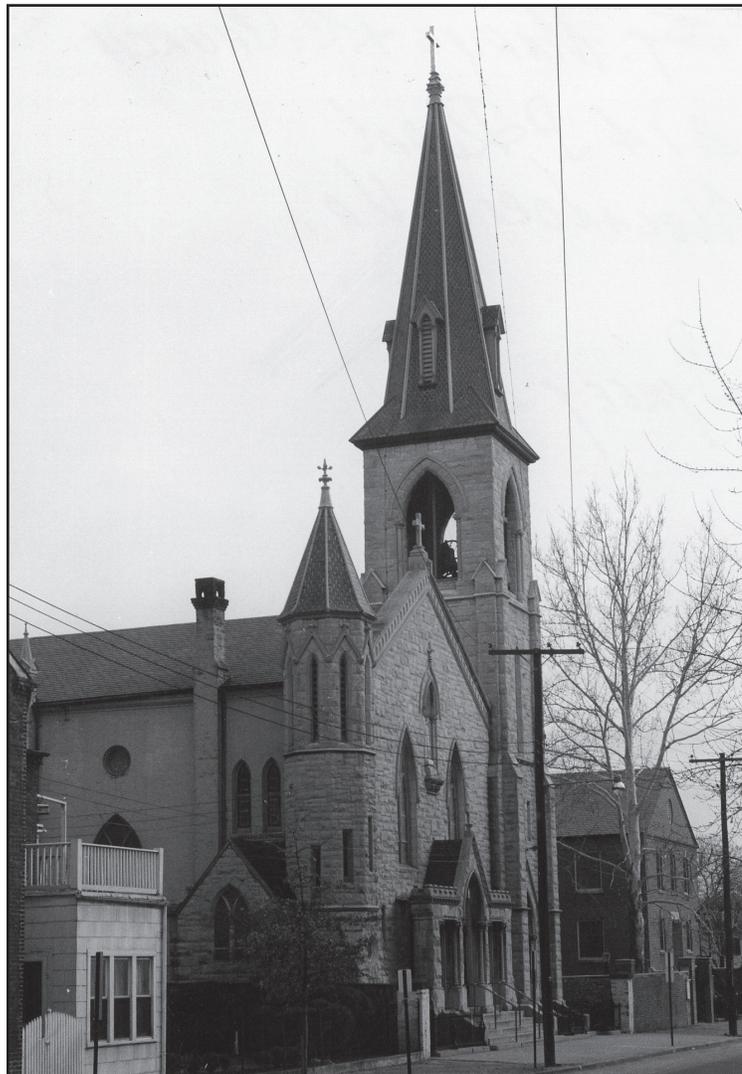
Basilica of Saint Mary

310 South Royal Street

1826-27, 1854-57, 1873, 1894, 1930-32, 2010

The Basilica of Saint Mary is a large Gothic Revival Catholic church that reflects almost 200 years of architectural change mirroring the evolution of Catholicism in the United States, and its history reveals the strong trans-riparian ties between Catholics in Virginia and Maryland. The original St.

Mary's chapel was the first Catholic church built in Virginia (1795), almost a decade after the "Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom" legalized Catholicism in the Old Dominion. The parish was founded by the Rev. Francis Neale, S.J., who was born in Maryland, educated at St. Omer's College, Belgium, and served at St. Thomas Manor in Charles County, Maryland. As pastor of Georgetown Chapel (now Holy Trinity Church), Neale established St. Mary's to serve the needs of Alexandria Catholics, who routinely crossed the Potomac to attend Mass. The parish was under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Baltimore until 1891, when St. Mary's became part of the Richmond diocese, and later the Arlington diocese in 1974.



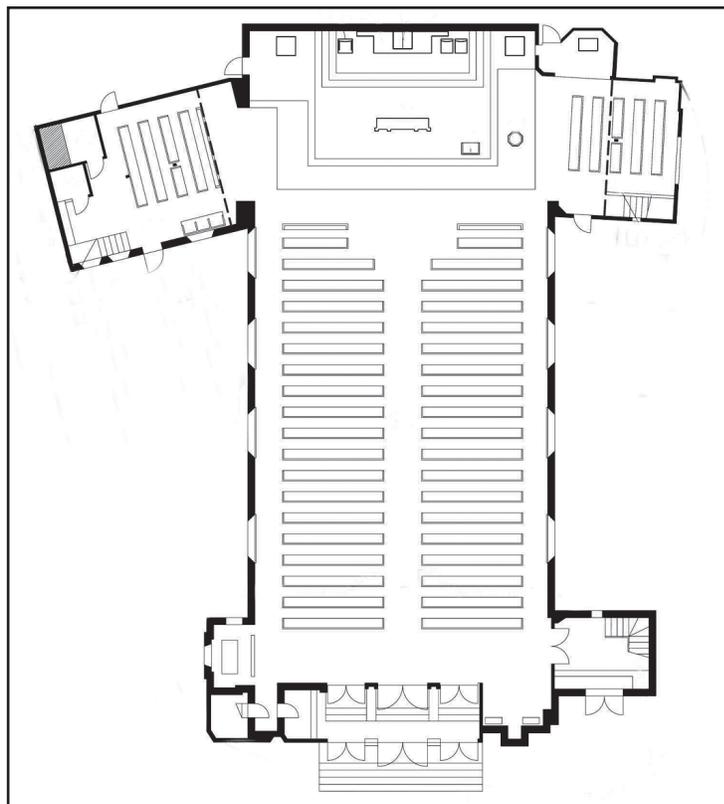
Basilica of St. Mary. View looking southeast showing 1890s rebuilding of the west end. Courtesy of Alexandria Public Library Special Collections, 1961.

The original St. Mary's chapel was a brick structure located a little outside the city at Washington and Church Street, where St. Mary's cemetery still stands. At the time of foundation, there were still only a few hundred Catholics in Virginia, but the congregation grew steadily, such that a larger church was required by 1810. The parish acquired a former Presbyterian meeting house and parsonage located on Chapel Alley between Fairfax and Royal Streets, and the move placed Catholic worship firmly in the city center, where it has remained.

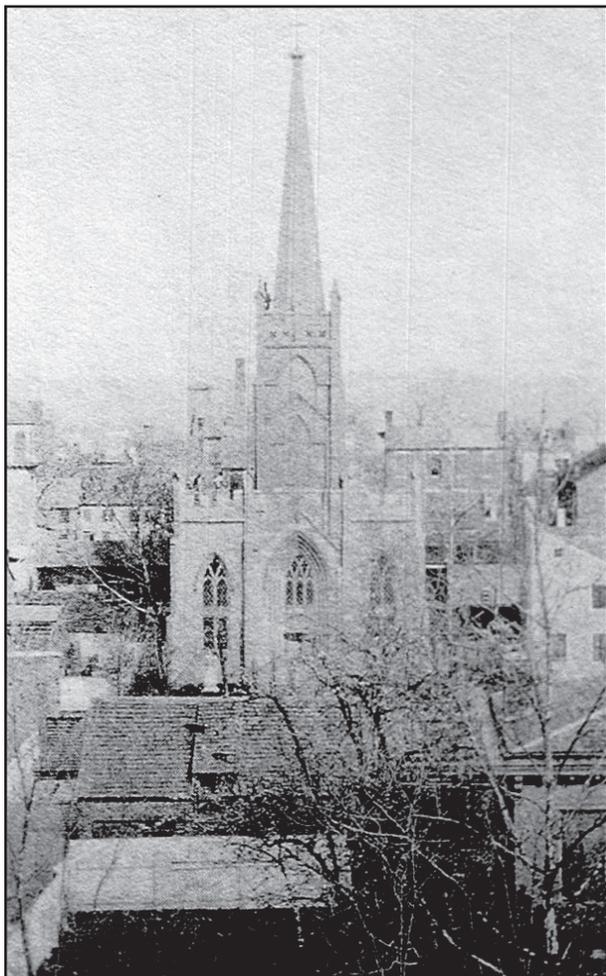
The current building was begun in 1826 when the cornerstone of a 45' x 60' church was laid; this church is still at the core of the present building. The completion came just in time for the influx of Irish immigrants brought to the city by construction of the C&O canal in 1828. The impact of continued Irish immigration both necessitated and made possible the further expansion of the church in the middle 1850s. The nave was expanded west, increasing the footprint to 45' x 90', and a basilica plan was created with the insertion of side aisles.

The tabernacle and Italian-marble altar, enriched with a relief depicting the Lamb of God embracing a Buttony cross representing the family of George Calvert, the first Lord Baltimore, were installed at this time. The exterior of the church was executed in full-blown Gothic Revival (building on a simpler expression than that used in the 1826 church) with three, tall lancet-shaped recesses on the west elevation, containing doorways (the mahogany doors are still in place) surmounted by tracery windows. Above a crenelated parapet, a tall tower adorned with pinnacles supported the tallest spire in the city.

In 1873, the transepts were added (unsymmetrically due to constraints of the setting) to create a cruciform plan, the roof was raised six feet and the side aisles were removed to establish an open nave. Two decades later, the west façade was rebuilt with a small turret on the north side and a tall bell tower on the south. This work slightly increased the seating of the nave and gave the church the final size and form it has today.



Basilica of St. Mary. Floor plan. Redrawn by Thomas A. Reinhart from the Basilica website.



Basilica of St. Mary. Historic photo, ca. 1860, showing 1850s Gothic Revival addition to west end. Courtesy Basilica of St. Mary.

The roof of the church was lost to fire in 1929, but was reconstructed in the first years of the 1930s. The sanctuary was in essence stripped of its traditional configuration in the 1970s after the Second Vatican Council. The high altar was disassembled and the altar placed away from the east wall; the altar rail and statuary were also removed.

The current configuration of the sanctuary was established in 2010 in an attempt to unite the requirements of the post-Vatican II liturgy with the church's historical character. A raised platform was created and floored with black and white marble tiles. While the 1856 altar was left disengaged from the wall, an engaged "altar of reposition" was created to hold the tabernacle and fill the architectural void created by the removal of the high altar. Likewise, while side altars were not reestablished, historic marble statues of Saints Mary and Joseph were returned to their original locations flanking the main altar.

Christ Church

118 North Washington Street

1767-73, 1787, 1820

Christ Church, constructed 1767–73, is an excellent expression of Anglican ecclesiastical architecture surviving from the Colonial period. When the City of Alexandria was established in 1749, the Church of England was the church of Virginia and, as such, it was protected by and part of the colonial government. Residents paid taxes to support the church.

A growing population led the Virginia legislature to divide Truro parish, creating a new Fairfax parish in

1764. As part of this restructuring, the vestry determined that two new churches were needed – one at Falls Church and one in Alexandria. Colonel James Wren was selected to design both churches. The construction of Christ Church began in 1767 under the direction of James Parson. Parson was not able to finish the project and John Carlyle saw the task to completion in February 1773.

The church as completed in 1773 was five bays by three bays, measuring approximately 60' x 50', a

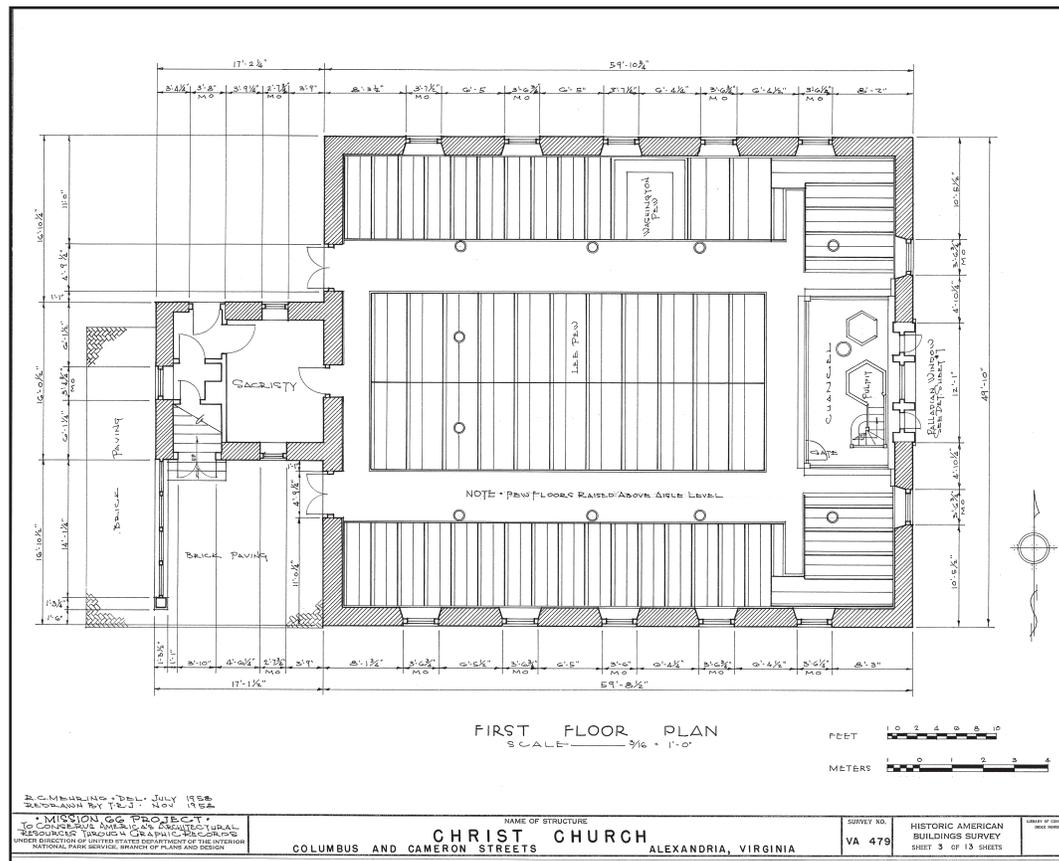
variant of the rectangular double aisle plan, one lacking the cross aisle and side entrance so commonly found in others of the type; the omission meant that Christ Church never had a side pulpit. The building has an unusual Flemish-bond foundation with molded water table, and the walls were also laid in Flemish bond, with embellished flat arches above the lower windows, arched upper openings, and corners quoined with Aquia Creek sandstone. The rusticated door surrounds were taken from the 1750 edition of Batty Langley's *The City and Country Builder's and Workman's Treasury of Designs*, as was the pattern for the Venetian Window on the east wall, which is a close cousin to the one George Washington placed in his New Room (1776-87).

The first expansion of the church took place in the early 1780s when the rector and several vestrymen privately financed the balcony and an exterior stair tower to access it on the west end. This stair tower was extended to make the belfry from 1818-21.



Christ Church. Looking northeast. Jeffrey Klee, 2016.

*Christ Church.
First Floor plan.
Drawn by R.C. Mehring,
Library of Congress,
Prints & Photographs
Division, HABS, 1958.*



The original wooden box pews were changed to slip pews in 1816 when the church no longer charged pew rents. After the Civil War, alterations were made to the pulpit and altar area, a new paint scheme was carried out and gas light fixtures installed. Parishioners were displeased with the changes, and in the 1890s architect and historian Glenn Brown was brought in to oversee the reinstallation of the interior features that would have been familiar to George Washington, including the current raised pulpit.

Christ Church's continuous operation as a house of worship combined with the congregation's awareness of the building's historic and architectural significance have contributed to the building's state of preservation, although changes still occur. In 2017, church leaders voted to remove plaques honoring Washington and Robert E. Lee, a longtime congregant, due to their connections to slavery.

*Christ Church. Historic view of sanctuary interior.
Library of Congress, Division of Prints & Photographs,
National Photo Company Collection 1921-22.*



Contraband Hospital

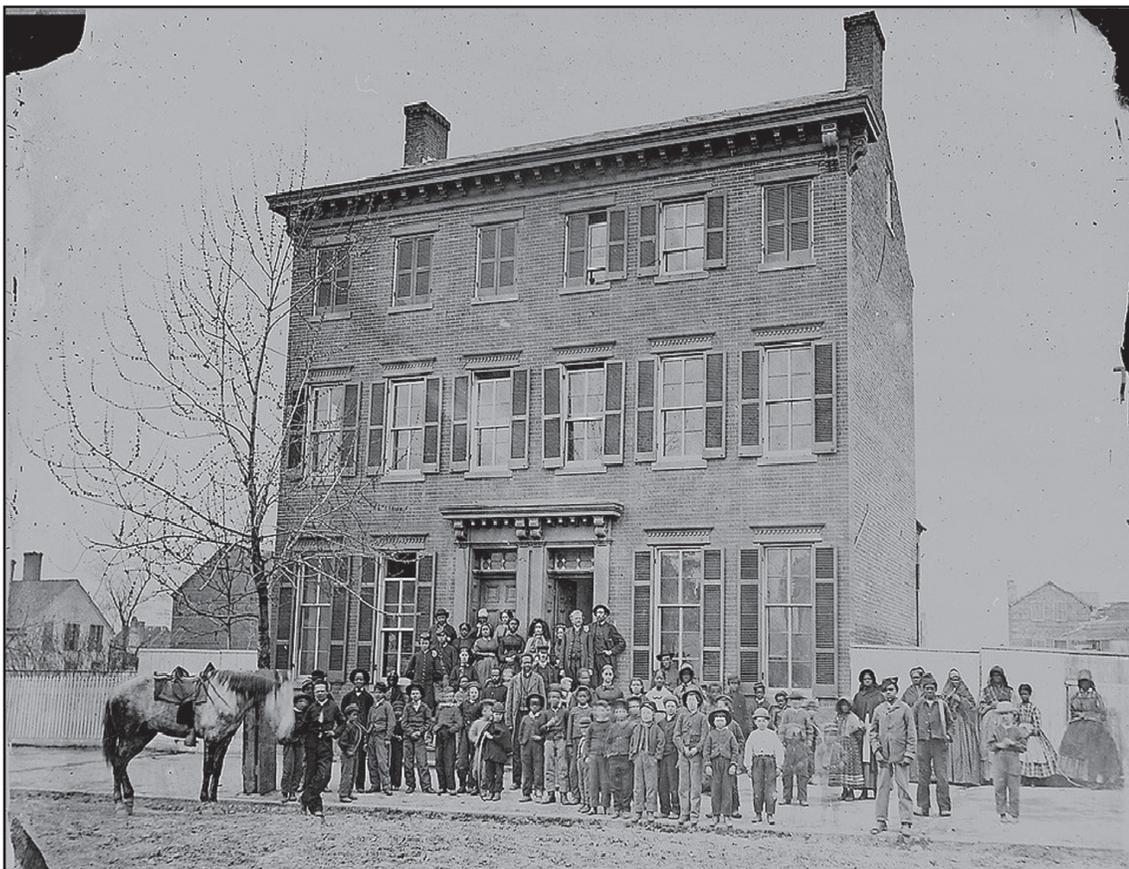
323 South Washington Street

1858- 89, 1960s

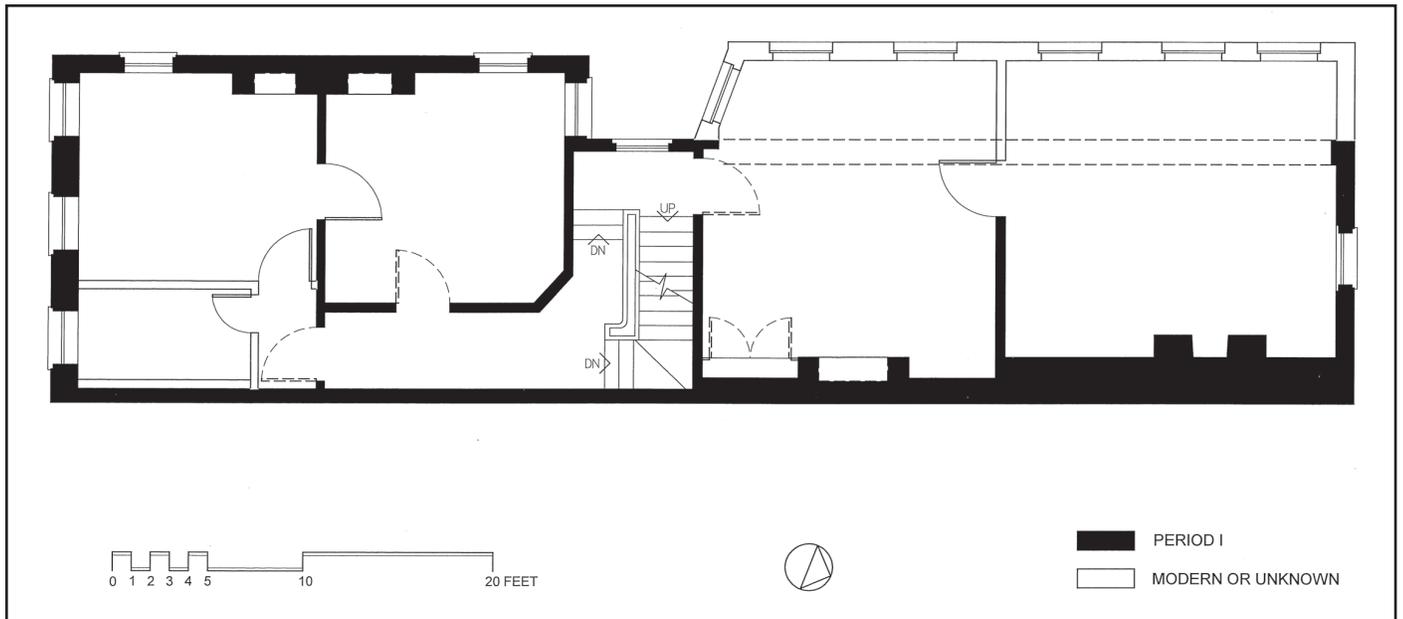
By the end of the Civil War, Alexandria housed more than 30 military hospitals, including what is alternately known as the Contraband Hospital, Bigelow's Hospital, the Colored Hospital or simply the Hospital on South Washington Street. Many of these hospitals were converted from other uses, including homes. Prior to the war, the Contraband Hospital building was actually two homes that shared a partition wall, owned respectively by father and son, Robert and Elisha Miller. Not long after being completed in 1859, the building was confiscated in 1863 due to the demand for administrative and relief support during the Federal occupation of the city. After the war, Robert Miller sold his home on the north half of the building, while Elisha Miller re-

turned to live in the south unit. Over the years, the building had several owners and tenants until it was purchased in the 1950s for use as Pearl Shriver's tourist home and rooming house. The building was converted to retail use in the 1960s, and it has operated continuously as commercial space since then. While the Contraband Hospital building was erected only a few years before the Civil War, was only used for war-time purposes for a few colorful years, and has since cycled through many owners and uses, its history is forever linked with the Civil War.

The double-house building at 321 and 323 South Washington Street was originally commissioned by Robert Hartshorne Miller, a china and glass



Contraband Hospital during the Civil War. This image prominently features both black and white subjects. Matthew Brady ca. 1864. Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration, Brady Collection.



Contraband Hospital. First Floor Plan. Drawn by Willie Graham and Ken Short, 2018.

merchant, on a lot he purchased in August 1853. Construction began between mid-1857 and early-1858, and these “brick tenements” were likely completed by late 1858 or early 1859. As the south unit was intended as a wedding gift for his son Elisha, Robert and his wife conveyed the unit to Elisha in June 1859. The two halves of the building were mirror images of one another, with each unit having three bays, identical fenestration and trim, and matching plans. The side-hall plan included a first-floor front parlor that, in typical Alexandria fashion, progressively led to a dining room and a kitchen at the back of the house; the entry door for each unit was aligned with the hall, concentrated at the center of the building. The second floor included four chambers, and the third floor had two attic rooms. The front (or east) exterior featured an elaborately carved cornice which ran the length of the building and had Italianate brackets in the corners, as well as window hoods over all of the windows. The original cornice and brackets, second and third floor window hoods, and several windows remain in situ.

Although the Millers were Quakers, pacifists and involved community members, their loyalties lay with Virginia during the Civil War. So, the Miller family left Alexandria when the war broke out, and their property was seized by the U.S. government. As fighting was very close to the town in the

early 1860s, it became flooded with a new war-time population, creating great need for administrative and relief facilities. By early 1862, the building was used for officers’ quarters and a medical dispensary. The influx of people included a growing number of “contrabands” or former slaves, some of whom fought in the war. In October 1862, Alexandria’s military governor appointed a commissary and physician to treat and vaccinate former slaves, designating the Miller homes as the first shelters for them. Julia Wilbur, a member of the Rochester Ladies’ Anti-Slavery Society, also became involved with the Alexandria Freedmen’s cause, setting up a clothing dispensary in the south side of the building in December 1862. The following year, Wilbur moved into the south unit, along with aid worker and former slave Harriet Jacobs, and continued to run the dispensary. In February 1863, the north unit was designated as “United States Army Hospital for Contrabands, Alexandria” and was run by Dr. John Reynolds Bigelow. Hospital records have not survived, but Wilbur frequently mentioned the hospital and its patients in her correspondence, as well as her poor view of Dr. Bigelow and his treatment of patients. Once the hospital outgrew the Miller building, the L’Ouverture Hospital complex (between Prince, Duke, South Payne and South West streets) was built, patients were moved, and the Contraband Hospital closed.

After the closure and until September 1865, the north unit was used as a medical dispensary for “contrabands” and an office for Dr. Amos Pettijohn, who managed the dispensary. In addition, beginning in May 1863, Reverend Albert Gladwin, the “Superintendent of Contrabands” for Alexandria, used the north unit as a base for his operations. He and his wife also began living in the south unit alongside many of his administrative employees and teachers at the Prince Street Barracks School, as well as Wilbur and Jacobs. For want of space, he actively tried to remove Wilbur and Jacobs from the building. During his attempts to remove the women, he described the house plans,

“The house we occupy has three rooms including store room and cook room, four in the second story, including servants room and two in the third story. The hospital under the same roof, is the same size with the same arrangements in apartments.”

The women were asked to relocate to the north unit in March 1864, but they left of their own accord by early-1865. Gladwin himself left in early-1865 after a dispute about where “contrabands” were to be buried, in the Freedmen’s Cemetery (a segregated cemetery) or the Soldiers Cemetery (an integrated cemetery). The medical dispensary and some teachers remained throughout 1865, but the

property was ultimately returned to the Millers before the end of the year. Robert almost immediately sold the north unit, while Elisha and his family moved back into the south unit. It does not appear that many, if any, changes were made to the building during the war years.

Over the intervening years, the building has had several owners and tenants. It was purchased in the 1950s for use as Pearl Shriver’s tourist home and rooming house. The building was then converted to retail use in the 1960s, including the addition of two ground-level, shop windows (in place of the four original windows) and the removal of the south unit’s entry door. The building has operated continuously as commercial space since that time, currently housing Sumpter Priddy III’s antique shop in the south unit. The entrance to the south unit is now on the alley-side of the building, creating a new entry point into the former front parlor via a small vestibule. While the front room was enlarged and the side passage eliminated, the unit still retains the original stair and the partitions between the three original, ground-floor rooms. The plan is also intact on the second and third floors. On the whole, the interior plan of the building has undergone few changes since its initial construction. At the same time, little documentation has been found detailing the post-war life of the building, which presents an opportunity for further in-depth research.

Friendship Firehouse

107 South Alfred Street

ca. 1855, 1871, 1972

The building at 107 South Alfred Street is a two-story, two-bay, nineteenth-century brick structure with a shed roof that housed Alexandria's first fire company, the Friendship Fire Company. Members were volunteers motivated by their concern for the property and well-being of the community. The Company, established in 1774, did not have a building of its own until they constructed a large equipment shed on King Street in 1839. In 1851, Alexandria City Council provided the organization \$275 toward purchasing a lot on the west side of South Alfred Street, between King and Prince Streets. They constructed a firehouse on the lot, only to have it destroyed by fire in March of 1855.

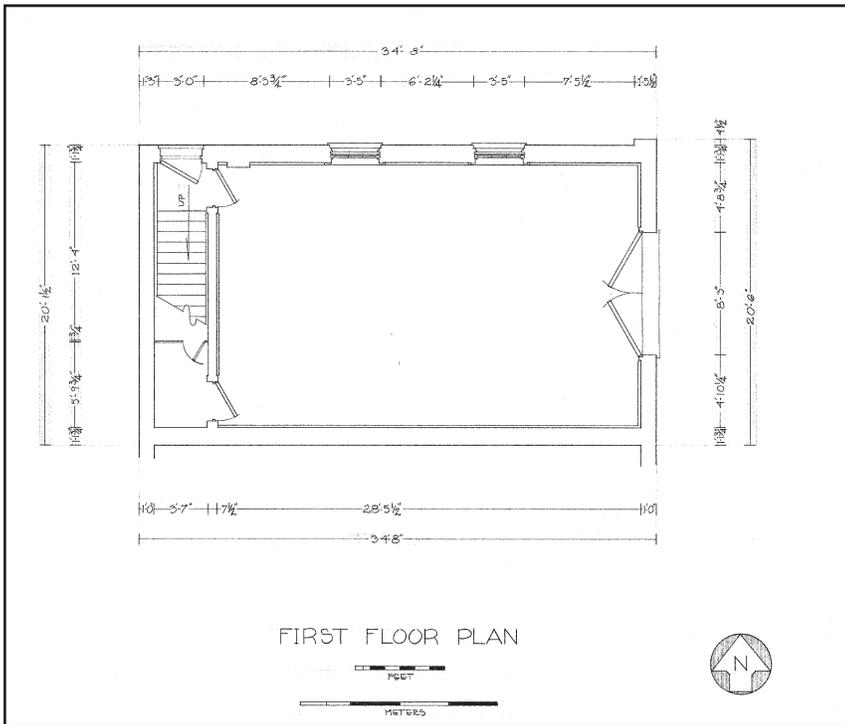
The Company rebuilt, completing their second building by October 1855 at the same location, which is what stands today, with some modifications. The primary (east) façade is 20'-6" wide with a depth of 34'-0" with one room per floor and a stair running straight along the west (rear) wall. This constitutes the original 1855 configuration of the firehouse. In 1855, the first-floor engine room had two door openings providing access from South Alfred Street. The second floor was a meeting room with a balcony at the South Alfred Street window. The firehouse also included a bell tower and steeple. Part of the masonry shell of this 1855 building survives, as do much of the cupola structure and other internal structural components. However, most of the visible fabric in place today dates to a renovation in 1871.

During the Civil War, Alexandria was occupied by Federal forces who assumed all responsibilities for firefighting. They took equipment from several fire companies and enforced a ban on their organizational activities. Possibly because of forced neglect during the occupation, Friendship's firehouse needed significant repair by early 1871. Structural failure of the lintels at the main doors led to the

total replacement of the front wall --- the rebuilt common-bond brick façade is distinctly visible. A new iron lintel was placed over a larger, single opening and the doorway's cast iron pilasters and the pediment may have been installed at the same time. The current pediment is pressed galvanized sheet metal and most likely a later replacement. Recent study of the fire company's minute books indicates that the brick floor in the first floor engine room was installed in the 1920s.



Friendship Firehouse. View from the northeast. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, ca. 1970.



*Friendship Firehouse. First Floor plan.
 Drawn by Herbert Darnell, Library of Congress,
 Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, 1964.*

The second-floor meeting room retains the original raised podium, flanked and framed by columns concealing bell pull ropes, and elevated daises located at the east end. The floor boards are random width tongue and groove with some face nailing and may date to 1855. In 1871, the balcony was not reinstalled at the large second-floor window. It appears the window openings in this front wall probably were not changed, based on the proportions and the low sill height which recall Greek Revival examples. The window pelmet and volute are cast iron. The north wall was stabilized. It required the construction of brick pilasters, iron braces set into the front wall, and tie rods. Except for the through bolts, these features are no longer evident. The wooden cupola was reduced in height at that time, and the steeple replaced with the low ribbed metal dome that exists today.

The history of the structure after 1871 is limited, although research continues. A two-story addition was added to the back of the firehouse in 1972 by the Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association, the name the Friendship Fire Company adopted in the mid-twentieth century. The addition was renovated in 1991 to suit the needs of a public museum when the historic firehouse was restored by the City of Alexandria. Today, the Friendship Firehouse is a museum owned and operated by the Office of Historic Alexandria, a department within the City of Alexandria.

Friendship Firehouse. Detail of exterior cornice. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, ca. 1970.



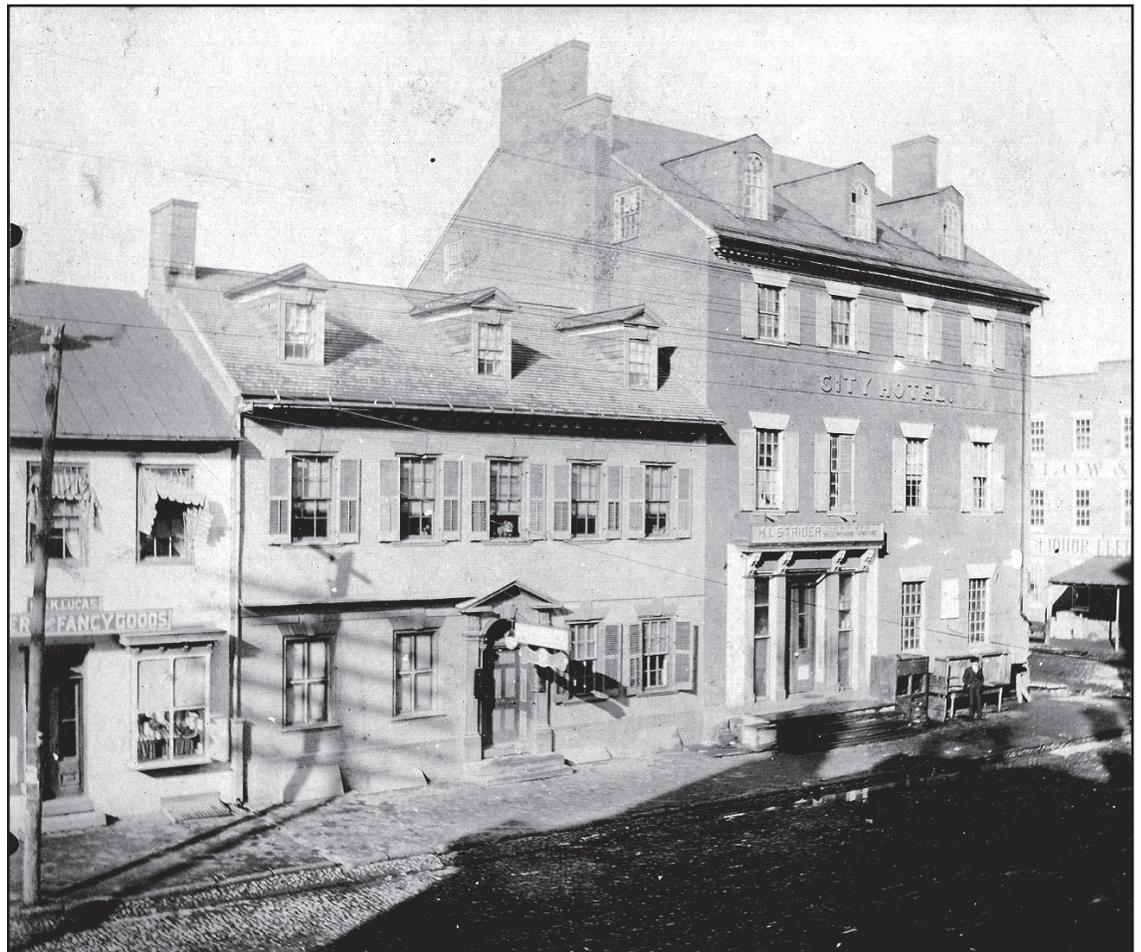
Gadsby's Tavern

134 North Royal Street
1785, 1792, 1932, 1940, 1976

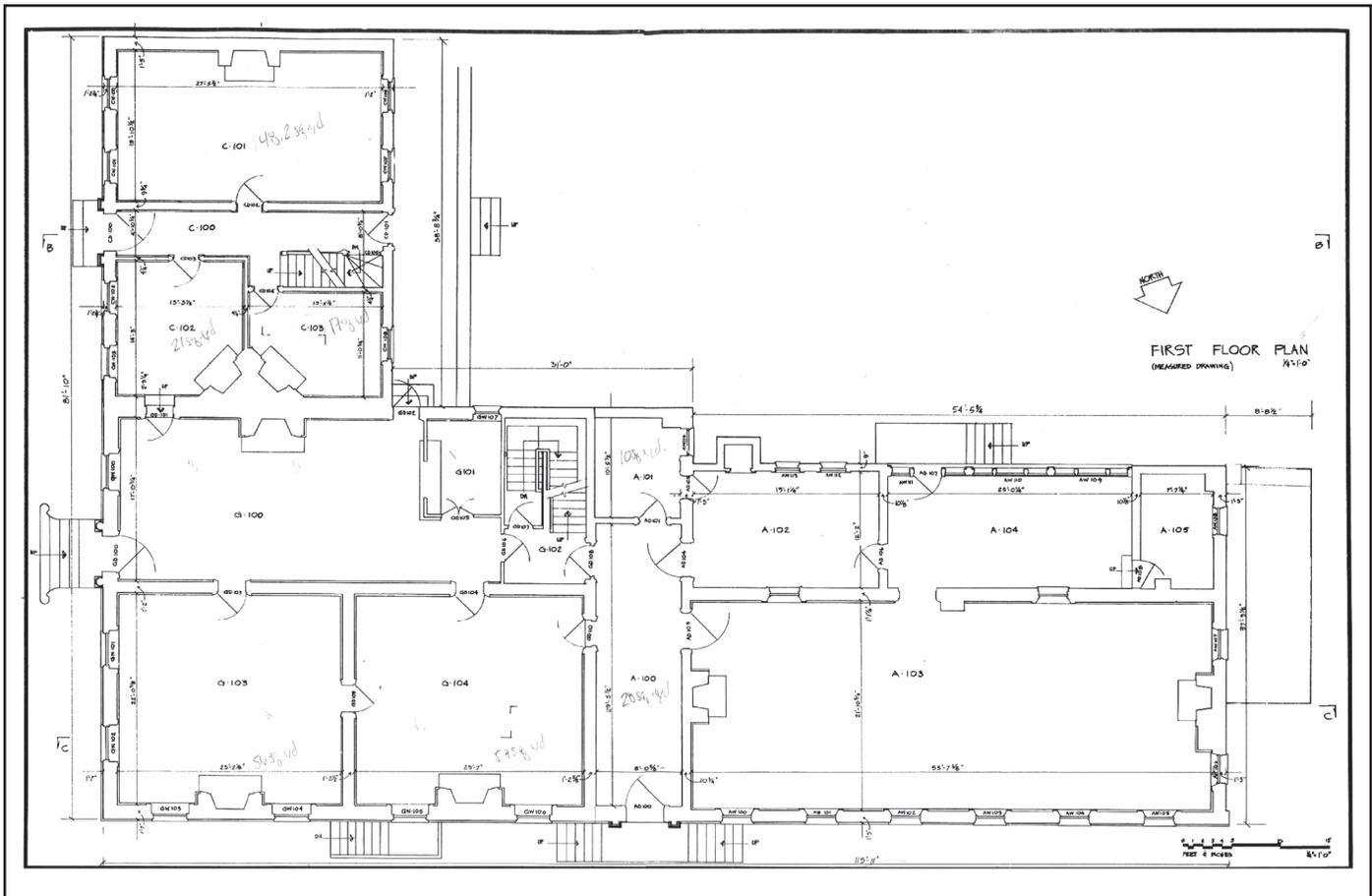
Gadsby's Tavern consists of two adjoining eighteenth-century buildings – a 1785 tavern and the 1792 City Tavern and Hotel. Unlike many taverns of this time, which often were converted from private homes (such as the Murray-Dick-Fawcett House), both buildings were built specifically to serve the public. Although the complex is today associated with John Gadsby, who operated it with his enslaved staff from 1796 to 1808, both buildings were constructed for John Wise, a Maryland native who moved to Alexandria in 1782. Notable patrons included George and Martha Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Monroe, and

the Marquis de Lafayette. At John Wise's death, the building complex was sold to the Irwin family, who would own the property until it was sold to the American Legion Post 24 in 1929.

The ca. 1785 tavern is a good example of a high-style late Georgian urban building, with a basement and water table, stone belt course, and stone flat arches with vermiculated keystones above the windows. The tavern is laid out with a first-floor center passage containing a recessed stair, with one large public room to one side and two smaller private rooms to the other. The second floor consisted entirely of a



*Gadsby's Tavern.
Historic image of
Gadsby's and City
Tavern and Hotel.
Courtesy of the
Alexandria Public
Library Special
Collections, n.d.*



Gadsby's Tavern. First floor plan. Drawn by J. Everette Fauber, 1976. Courtesy City of Alexandria.

large multi-purpose assembly room used for dancing and entertainments. The third floor consisted of three dormered sleeping rooms. The cellar contained a kitchen and storage room. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw several periods of adaptation. The first floor initially was turned into a subscription coffee house, while the second-floor assembly room was subdivided into offices, and subsequently the first floor was converted into a clothing store with a separate front door just to the south of the original entrance.

The 1792 City Tavern and Hotel building was built to be a first-class hotel in the Federal style. It has a basement and water table, but its walls have lost all the embellishments of its earlier neighbor, and it displays the plain, planar elevation of the style. Its wooden cornice returns along the gable side forming a pediment. The first floor contained a restaurant, bar, and private dining rooms, while the second floor had three large sleeping rooms

and a large ballroom which featured a hanging musician's gallery. The third floor featured suites which could accommodate large families, while the garret was divided into four large dormitory-style sleeping spaces. Like the earlier tavern building, the City Tavern and Hotel was altered over time. The first-floor space was adapted in the mid-nineteenth century to accommodate a Victorian façade and a renovation of the dining and bar rooms. The ballroom also was altered at roughly the same time into three bedrooms with parlors. As the nineteenth century wore on, the hotel transitioned into a rooming house with merchant space on the first floor.

As multiple alterations denatured the building, the ballroom woodwork and two first floor mantels were removed and sold in 1917 to the Metropolitan Museum of Art for use in their American Wing. The removal triggered an angry response from residents of the city, who supported the sale

of the complex to American Legion Post 24 before any further harm could come to it. After the sale in 1929, architect Milton Grigg was hired to restore the buildings, completing enough of the restoration by 1932 to allow a ball to be held in the 1792 building. In 1940, Thomas Waterman was hired to create an exact replica of the ballroom woodwork at the Met to be placed back in the original space. In the 1970s the Legion donated the buildings to the City of Alexandria, where they underwent a full renovation by J. Everette Fauber, completed in 1976 in time for the bicentennial. The multiple generations of restoration reproduced missing trim, but also transferred surviving trim from the garret for use on the lower floors; despite this, the garret retained a good deal of original finish.

The two taverns have a back courtyard that was originally delineated by a number of service

buildings that were recorded in a 1796 Mutual Assurance Society policy. The two tavern buildings stood along the east side of the courtyard. The 1785 structure was described as a 38' x 30' brick coffee house, two stories, covered in wood, and valued at \$4,000; the 1792 building was called a 42' x 51' brick tavern, three stories, covered in wood, and valued at \$15,000. The north side of the courtyard was bounded by a 36' x 17' brick dwelling house and kitchen facing Cameron Street, two stories, covered in wood, and occupied by John Wise; it was valued at \$2,000. To the west stood a 22' x 70' frame stable valued at \$1,050 and a 14' x 16' frame washhouse noted to be for the use of Wise. Along the south side was a 30' by 16' wood coach house worth \$150, flanked by an uninsured privy 16' wide. Close to the coffee house was a frame, one-story kitchen, 18' x 16', valued at \$200 and occupied by a Mrs. Griffith.

Gadsby's Tavern. Interior view of door showing classical detail and the elegant open-string stair beyond. Courtesy of the Alexandria Public Library Special Collections, 1936.



Ghequiere House

202 King Street

1795-97, mid-nineteenth century, 1940s

The impressive brick structure at 202 King Street was commissioned in 1795 by Bernard Ghequiere, an émigré French merchant, who purchased the lot in that year. Ghequiere arrived in Alexandria in 1792 after fleeing the French Revolution. By April 1793 he was operating a business on the corner of King and Fairfax streets selling imported goods. Ghequiere commissioned the three-and-a-half story Federal-style building, which was completed in 1797 and insured the following year. The front elevation is constructed in Flemish bond, using well-molded brick laid with rather tight joints, Aquia Creek sandstone belt courses and jack arches, and an elaborate wooden cornice. The

dwelling has a two-story rear ell that was noted on a 1798 insurance policy as containing a kitchen and a smoke house; a washhouse that stood across the yard is now gone. The first-floor of the ell contains three rooms, two cook rooms and a smoke house in the rear along the alley. The insurance policy depicts the wing as abutting the house, and it still does, but the original configuration of the connection has been obscured by later alterations. The garrets of these two-story brick outbuildings likely functioned as slave quarters.

The first story of the King Street elevation has been altered several times. A grainy, Civil-War-era



Ghequiere House. Exterior view of the building (on the right) during the Civil War showing evidence of original configuration. Courtesy of Dr. Morgan D. Delaney and Osborne Phinizy Mackie.

*Ghequiere House.
Interior view of the
drawing room and its
delicate, Adamesque
ornament on the
chimneypiece.
Willie Graham, 2017.*



photograph records the jack arches of the original configuration indicating the existence of four bays on the ground level, with the left-hand opening that holds the entrance to the dwelling appearing to be slightly wider than the other three. A 1924 image records the insertion of a modern store front that completely removed the three, right-hand bays; the left-hand entry shows steps still in place. The commercial space currently reflects two post-Ghequiere periods. The plan is open, but a jog in the wall it shares with the entry/stair passage of the house, and the relationship of the pilasters and pier to that jog, suggest that a cross wall originally existed. The trim on the pilasters, pier, rear window and around the large opening in the rear wall likely date to sometime around 1850. The street level door, and the comical way that the nineteenth-century elements float about four feet off the floor indicate that the floor level was dropped to street level, possibly when the shop front in the 1924 photograph was inserted. This change may also have impacted the street entrance to the dwelling, requiring the creation of the small vestibule with the stairs.

Neither the insurance policy nor the early photograph suggest that the first floor was a commercial space. The policy annotates the sketch of the structure: "Dwlg. A. House built of brick, 3 stories high, covered with wood, 43 x 32." It is probable

that the current use of the second floor reflects the original arrangement of the first, with a drawing room on the street side and a dining room in the rear communicating with the service wing.

Originally and now, the dwelling was/is entered through the leftmost bay. Today one enters into a street-level vestibule containing five steps leading up to a door into the first floor passage. The doorway at the passage level contains a mix of historic and new trim. It is not clear whether this was the original arrangement; the early photo seems to record an exterior stair in place, but it clearly shows the building after the conversion of the first floor to a shop, leaving the point uncertain. The passage is divided between an entry and a stair hall, separated by an archway detailed with fluted pilasters and a keystone. The narrow floor boards are original—they are gauged and undercut in the normal way of the eighteenth-century Chesapeake—but they are unusually-narrow for the period. The entry has a door along the right-hand wall that leads into the commercial space. The door and trim are reproduced, but the opening originally would have lead into the dwelling's front room. The stair passage has a door along the right-hand wall, leading to what would have been the first floor rear room, and a door to the rear yard under the landing; there is a small closet tucked under the stair



Ghequiere House. Close-up, interior view of the drawing room's elaborate, high-relief plasterwork of the cornice. Willie Graham, 2017.



Ghequiere House. View of entry and stair passage. Thomas A. Reinhart 2018.

that has been converted to a bathroom. The stair rises along the left-hand wall with a rail supported by slender, rectangular balusters.

The stair arrives at a small second-floor landing which communicates with two rooms. A large, well-finished room occupies the entire front half of the house. The elaborate neoclassical plaster cornice sets the tone for the room and is echoed in the composition ornament of the mantel. The rear room steps the ornamentation down, concentrating principally on the Adamesque mantel. The room's current use as a dining room is suggested by the cupboards that flank the fireplace, but the original dining room almost certainly would have been below this room. The second floor of the ell, once part of the free standing service building has two heated rooms and an unheated one to the rear. When this level of the ell was connected with the house is not known, but probably dates to the conversion of the first floor into commercial space in the mid-nineteenth century. The elaborate finishes of the second-floor rooms, most likely chambers originally, hint at the quality

of the finishes of the now-lost public rooms of the first floor.

The rooms of the third floor are much less refined than those of the second, comprising bedrooms and storage rooms. The garret level likely served for storage.

Ghequiere sold the property in 1800 to Jonathan Swift, a young and rising merchant, and relocated to Baltimore, where his brother was a well-established and prosperous businessman. Around 1820, the building was occupied by the Union Bank. At the outset of the Civil War, in 1861, it was expropriated by the US government, along with its neighbor at 200 King Street, for use as the 100-bed King Street hospital for Union troops. By the 1930s, it had become a tenement. A restoration was undertaken in the 1940s by Thomas E. Waggaman, Marshall of the US Supreme Court, and his brother Lawrence;

the brothers rented the commercial space as the Chequire (the name had been anglicized) House Books and Records Shop, as well as two apartments in the residence above. During this period, the drawing room on the second floor was used by the Alexandria Association for its meetings.

In 1954, it became the home of Mr. and Mrs. Henry C. Land, Jr., who established the business, The Market Square Shop, in the commercial space. The Market Square Shop has been in this location for 64 years.

Dr. Morgan D. Delaney and Osborne Phinizy Mackie purchased the building in 1998. Restoration work, including investigation of the original paint colors, was undertaken between 2011 through 2014. The furnishings throughout Ghequiere House are regional, with emphasis on Alexandria, Georgetown, Annapolis and Baltimore makers.



Ghequiere House. Floor Plans. Drawn by Ken Short and Thomas A. Reinhart, 2018.

Lloyd House

220 North Washington Street

1796-97

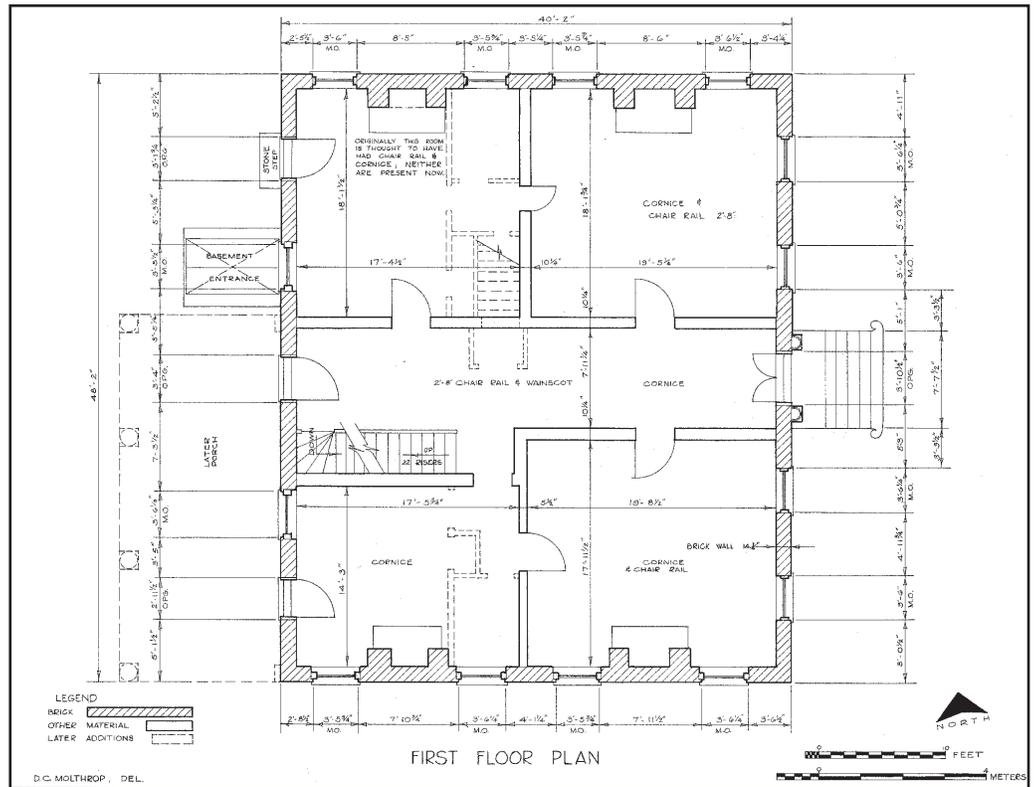
The Lloyd House, also known as the John Wise House or the Wise-Hooe-Lloyd House, is one of the best examples of the late eighteenth-century town houses built for Alexandria's merchant class. Documentary sources indicate that the house was built ca. 1796-1797 by Alexandria's "Tavern King," John Wise. With its center hall plan and strict symmetry, modillion and dentil cornice, molded sills,

Aquia sandstone trim, and highly decorated and pedimented entrance architrave, the building is a very late example of a fully-realized Georgian town house in an architecturally conservative city. The roof is gabled with arched dormers and tall paired inside end chimneys. The cornice returns across the north end, a feature seen in several local buildings. The emerging Federal style is represented on



Lloyd House. Exterior view. Andrea Tracey, 2018.

Lloyd House. First floor plan, drawn by D.C. Molthrop, Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, 1959.



the exterior by the absence of the characteristically Georgian, projecting masonry string course or belt course to visually separate the first and second stories and the absence of a projecting water table at the base. The Lloyd House's interior is somewhat more Federal than its exterior, with attenuated stair balusters and simple mantels, but with typically Georgian cross-topped door surrounds.

The Lloyd House exhibits some similarities to Wise's City Tavern and Hotel building of 1792. They both have similar main entrances, similar cornices, and similar pediments on the street-facing side gables. The stair balusters of the house are similar in proportion and profile to those of the musicians' gallery of the hotel ballroom.

A freestanding brick kitchen, 2-1/2 stories in height and measuring approximately 18' by 26', stood at the southwest corner of the building until the 1910s.

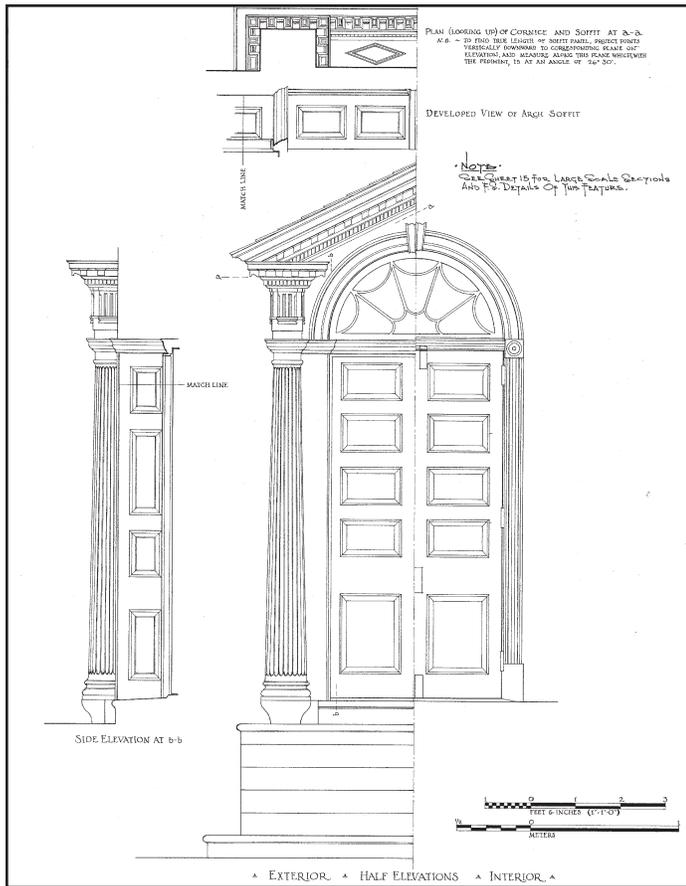
John Wise moved to Washington Street after he leased his City Tavern and Hotel to English-born innkeeper John Gadsby in 1796. After his retirement as an innkeeper, he became a veritable gentleman, living off the rents of his real estate. Wise retained a large number of enslaved servants in later years to run his household and other business interests.

The Washington Street house's slave quarters were likely concentrated in the basement and in the upper floor of the kitchen outbuilding.

The building is also historically significant due to the number of prominent people who lived there. Occupied initially by John Wise, it was then leased to Charles Lee, younger brother of Henry "Light-Horse Harry" Lee. Charles Lee served in the presidential administrations of George Washington and John Adams as attorney general and was appointed to a position as a federal judge during the last hours of Adams' administration. Lee returned to private law practice, serving as council for the plaintiffs in the landmark Supreme Court case, *Marbury vs Madison*. He later participated with the defense in the impeachment trial of Justice Samuel Chase and treason trial of Aaron Burr.

Jacob Hoffman purchased the house and its nearly half acre lot in 1810 and soon became engaged in the refining of sugar. This enterprise proved extremely profitable but only for a very brief time, and by 1825 the house and its garden were sold to Elizabeth Hooe.

In 1826, Hooe invited Benjamin Hallowell, a Quaker educator and tutor of Robert E. Lee, to move his school to the site. The school was quickly a success



Lloyd House. Front Entrance elevation and details, James T. Wollon, Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, 1959.

in terms of the numbers of students who were educated there, but Hollowell was deeply in debt. He later converted the sugar refinery and tobacco warehouse on the adjacent property to a residence and dormitory for his boarding school, and Lloyd House was sold again. Hollowell continued his school until 1842 in another location, ultimately employing a total of 29 teachers during his career in Alexandria. Hollowell educated hundreds of children and presented scientific lectures to their parents, often at The Lyceum, which he founded in 1839.

John Lloyd bought the house at auction and took possession of his new home in December 1833. Lloyd was a successful dry goods merchant and soon began investing extensively in real estate. His wife, Anne Harriotte Lee, was a first cousin of Robert E. Lee and frequently entertained Lee in the house. The Lloyd family owned the home until 1918.

The next occupants were William Albert Smoot, Jr. and his descendants. Smoot, a lumber dealer, served

as Mayor of the City under the first city manager form of government. He also served as a member of the Virginia House of Delegates. The Smoot family owned Lloyd House until 1942.

During World War II, 52 members of the Navy Women's Reserve (WAVES) occupied the house while they were employed at the U. S. Naval Torpedo Station on Union Street.

By 1956, the house was slated for demolition until Wyoming geologist Robert Valentine New read about the possible loss and purchased the property. The Historic Alexandria Foundation secured the money to buy out the demolition contract.

By 1966, the City of Alexandria began taking steps to acquire the house. The Alexandria Historical Restoration and Preservation Commission took on the project of raising funds for the purchase of the building and for its subsequent rehabilitation.

The Lloyd House was further restored in 2002-07. It is now the administrative headquarters of the Office of Historic Alexandria.

Lloyd House. Detail of stair. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, 1933.



Meade Memorial Episcopal Church

*322 North Alfred Street
Sanctuary 1913, Parish Hall 1955,
connecting foyer and second story offices 1990*

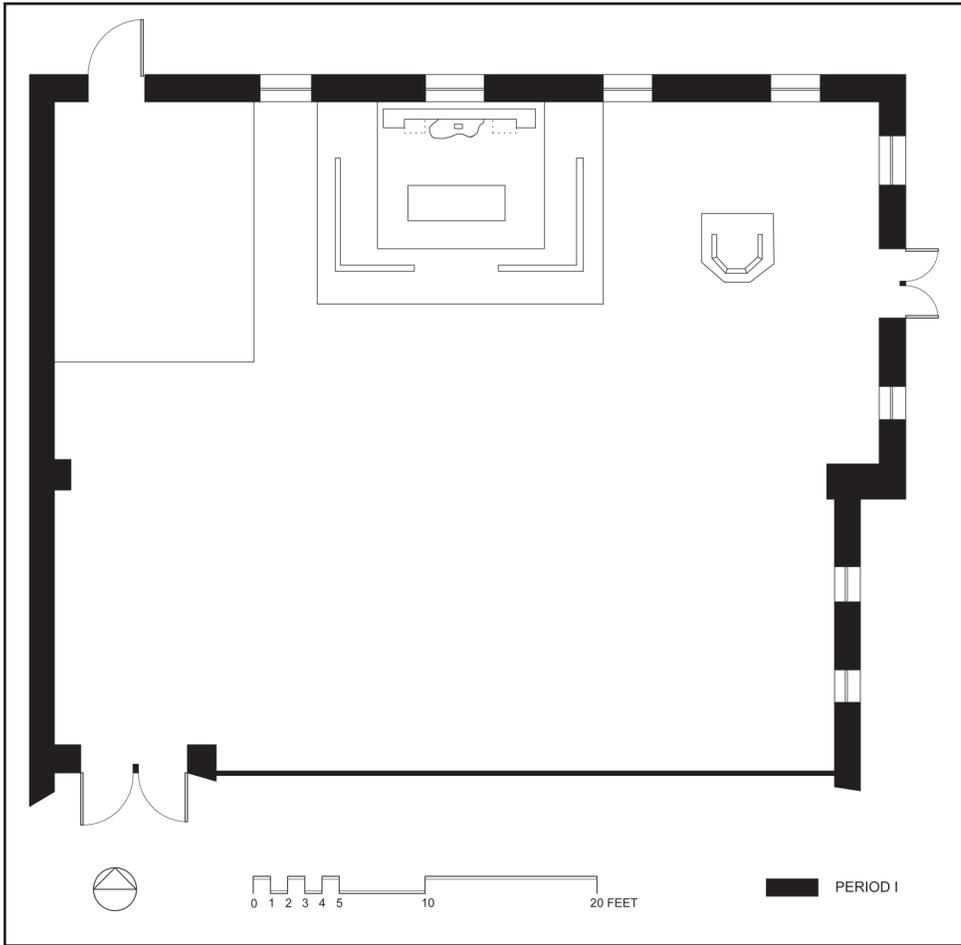
Meade Memorial Episcopal Church has been an anchor of the African-American community in Alexandria for nearly 150 years. Though the sanctuary that has housed the congregation at the corner of Princess and Alfred Streets for over a century has transformed over the decades to meet the changing needs of a vibrant congregation, the structure combines a sense of building tradition and local history that conveys its deep roots in the community.

The three-bay, front-facing gable chapel is a clear example of the local interpretation of Gothic

Revival. Designed in 1912 by local architect Lem Clark, the chapel is clad in red brick laid in American bond. A low brick wall surrounds the entire site, and the sanctuary is set back 20 feet from the sidewalk, providing an outdoor narthex for the congregation to gather. Over the original paired paneled wood front doors is a gabled hood supported by knee brackets and a small cross centered beneath the projecting eaves. These wood details are reminiscent of Stick Style ornament, distinguishing the chapel from the surrounding neighborhood of mostly brick rowhouses.



Meade Memorial Episcopal Church. Exterior view. Ken Short, 2018.



Meade Memorial Episcopal Church. Sanctuary plan. Drawn by Ken Short, 2018.

The pointed arch openings are filled with modern stained-glass windows that infuse the interior with spiritual and historical imagery. On one window, quotations from the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. are highlighted. Another window portrays an intricate scene depicting the text from John 8:12, with the Virgin Mary modeled after Sojourner Truth set in the context of contemporary Alexandria streets. These windows, which line the east and north elevations of the building are surrounded by drip moldings formed by curved sailor bricks which emphasize the vertical nature of the openings. On the north side of the building, stepped brick buttresses with stone caps separate the windows and create a regular rhythm on the exterior.

To the south of the sanctuary sit two additions, one a parish hall built in 1955 that provided much needed meeting space, and a foyer that connects the parish hall and sanctuary built as part of a 1990 renovation. In that late twentieth-century transfor-

mation, not only were the two independent buildings united and capped with a second story for office and classroom space, but the sanctuary was reorganized to accommodate various sized gatherings. The traditional east-west orientation of the single aisle parish design was reoriented so the altar and pulpit are now aligned along the north wall with the stained-glass windows surrounding an illuminated cross. The pews now face north, and there is plenty of room for moveable chairs allowing parishioners to adapt the space for multiple uses, including a popular jazz concert series open to the public. Even more flexibility is provided by the accordion wall structure that separates the sanctuary from the foyer, which when open can unite the entire interior first floor.

The current building sits on the third location for this congregation. Originally formed April 14, 1870 as a mission church of nearby Christ Church (located at 118 North Washington Street), Meade began as an outreach to new communities during recovery from the Civil War. Though no images have survived of the original mission church, from written descriptions it was a small wood frame structure with a capacity for 150-170 congregants built at a cost of \$1,100 in a neighborhood next to the canal basin. Known locally as Cross Canal, this neighborhood is northeast of the current location of Meade Memorial Episcopal Church in the Parker-Gray historic district. Though none of the original structures from this era survive in Cross Canal, the first church would have been located one block south of the Crowne Plaza hotel, conference headquarters.

Descriptions of the first Meade mission church in newspapers do not mention the race of the congregants, and within the context of contemporary reporting where other churches and organizations

are defined as “colored”; this likely signifies that the congregation was either white or of mixed race with white leadership from Christ Church. Meade Chapel was named in honor of Right Reverend William Meade, a unifying figure in the Episcopal church in Alexandria. Bishop of Virginia and rector of Christ Church from 1811-1813, just after that congregation split, forming St. Paul’s (228 South Pitt Street) in 1809, Reverend Meade also took part in the founding of the Virginia Theological Seminary in 1823, a source of support for Meade Chapel over the years.

Shortly after the founding of Meade Chapel, Christ Church embarked on another mission, to hold Sunday School services for African Americans. Under the direction of Mr. John Janney Lloyd, a theological student and son of a prominent Alexandria family, interest in the school grew quickly. Based on this success, in 1872, Mr. JJ Lloyd convinced the vestry of Christ Church to use Meade Chapel for the purposes of establishing an Episcopal church for African Americans. Mrs. Anna Maria Fitzhugh, aunt of Mrs. Robert E. Lee, offered a lot at the northeast corner of Princess and Columbus streets as a site for the new chapel. Though there were some public protests after it was revealed that the congregation would be African American, ultimately the frame structure was moved on rollers nearly ten blocks to its second location and opened for services in May 1873. This marks the racial segregation of the Christ Church congregation: up to this point, African American parishioners were assigned to sit in pews at the back of the church. Now, they were sent to Meade Chapel for services.

Meade chapel remained under the control of Christ Church for most of the late nineteenth century, where Mr. JJ Lloyd oversaw the Sunday school with regular attendance of 50-90 children. He also established a parish school for 100 children; teachers at both schools were mostly white and were drawn from the Christ Church congregation. By 1876, Mr. Lloyd was ordained, had left Meade Chapel, and was replaced with seminary students and a series of deacons to oversee services and the schools. In 1886, Reverend Walter M. Burwell, a recently ordained deacon and only the second African American to lead the congregation at Meade, noted that the building was in poor condition and inadequate to serve the needs of the

growing congregation. When Reverend Joseph F. Miller was assigned as rector to Meade Chapel in 1907, which still was under the control of Christ Church, he energized the congregation to raise funds and replaced the building. With support from the Episcopal network of churches in Alexandria, including Christ Church, St. Paul’s, and Grace Church, congregants raised the \$10,000 needed to build a new structure. In 1911, they realized that the site on Princess and Columbus was too small to accommodate the new sanctuary and sold the site to fund the purchase of a new lot at the northwest corner of Princess and Alfred Streets, the current home of Meade Memorial Episcopal Church.

Meade Memorial Episcopal Church. Sanctuary interior looking northwest. Christine Henry, 2016.



1 Muirs Court

ca. 1871

The two-story, frame double house at 1 and 2 Muirs Court is a modest structure reflecting a long history of speculative and rental properties in the city, especially those situated along Alexandria's many alleys. Based upon tax records and deeds, these houses were probably built in the second half of 1871, when the northeast quadrant of the city began to develop. These structures stand near the southern edge of Uptown, the first black neighborhood established north of King Street. Uptown, which began as a small cluster of buildings, grew

rapidly after the Civil War as African Americans moved to Alexandria to find work. Records indicate that furniture manufacturer James Muir constructed these and other modest row houses to serve as rental units for laborers. The small scale of the row house—with exceptionally-low ceiling heights—and modest building materials are indicative of housing for working class residents. For most of their history, these row houses were rented by African Americans.

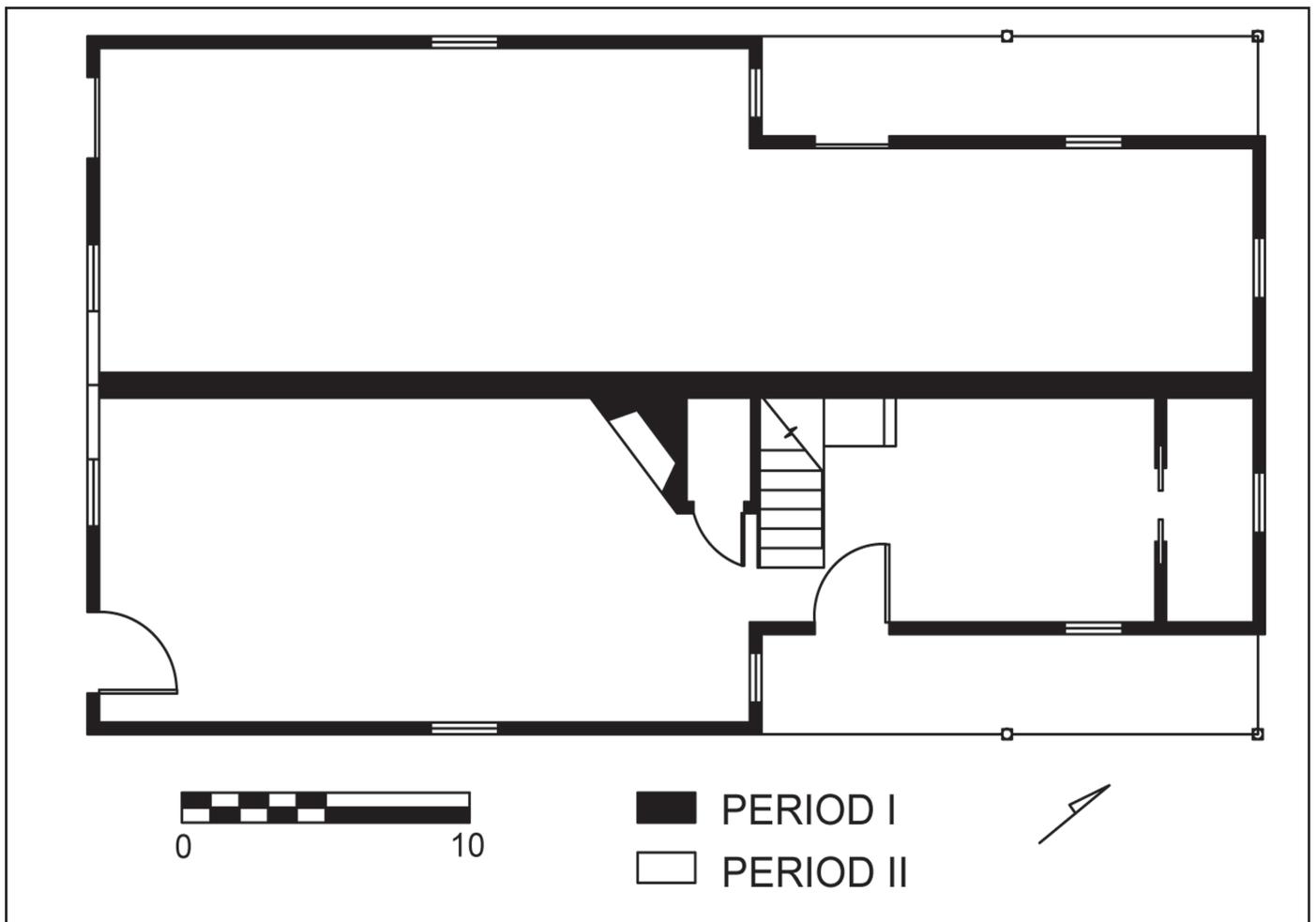


1 Muirs Court. South facing façade (right side of image). Ken Short, 2018.

One Muirs Court follows the typical Alexandria house plan, albeit on a diminutive scale; only two bays wide, measuring a mere 11 feet 5 inches across. Instead of entering into a side stair passage that gives access into most rooms of the house, the street door opens directly into a 22 foot-long room constituting the entire first floor of the main block of the house. A small, corner fireplace in the back, interior corner heats the room. The rear ell contains a small stair and a back room, now used as a kitchen, with

a small room at the very back. The stair rises to a small landing that divides to lead to the main block on the left and the ell on the right. A narrow, two-story porch runs along the side of the ell.

The house underwent substantial rebuilding in the late twentieth century after it began to sag. The exterior siding dates to this work, but it replaced original lap siding.



1 Muirs Court. First floor plan. Drawn by Willie Graham and Thomas A. Reinhart, 2017.

Murray-Dick-Fawcett House

517 Prince Street

1775, 1790s, ca. 1820

The wooden house at 517 Prince Street is a rare pre-Revolutionary survivor in urban Alexandria, made complex by additions after the war to convert it into a tavern. It began as a five-bay, Chesapeake hall-chamber house with a center door. The entry provided access to the hall (west/left room), from which one gained access to the inner (east/right) room and to two upper chambers via an L-shaped stair in the rear right corner. Just the hall and room above it were heated. Its initial construction has been dated by dendrochronology to 1775. The exterior doorways had sheathed and paneled leaves. Outside, early horizontal sheathing covers brick nogging or “filling”.

An advertisement from 1792 reports that there were then “four first-floor rooms, three of them heated, two rooms upstairs, and a kitchen appended”. A new shed added to the rear of the dwelling housed the two additional heated rooms. At the same time, the front entry was closed and a new entry was established on the east side of the shed addition, placed within a shuttered porch outfitted with benches along the walls. The former front door was hung in this doorway, which opened to an L-shaped passage. The passage ran between the rear wall of the original house and board walls that created a northeast chamber in the addition. The placement of the passage between the old



Murray-Dick-Fawcett House. West elevation. Jeff Klee, 2016.

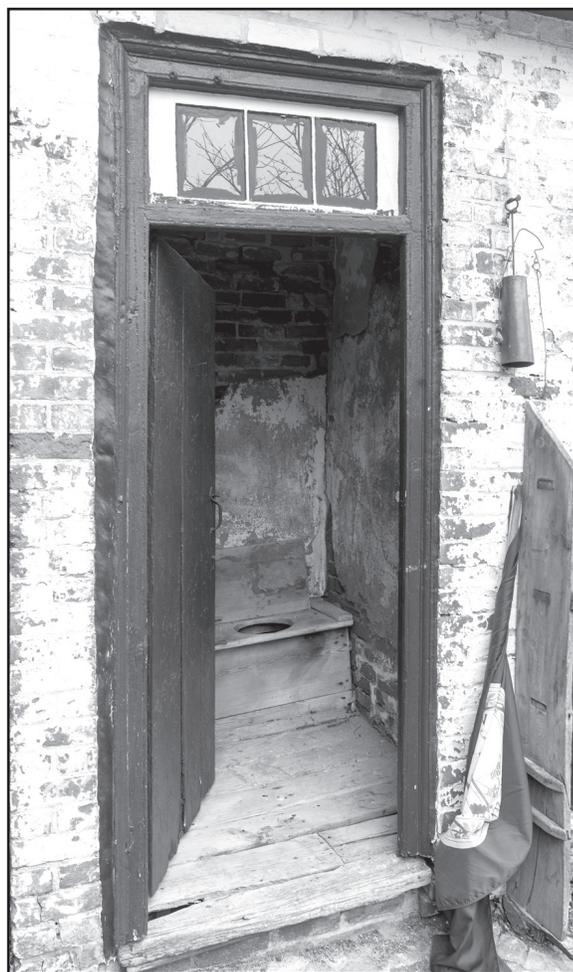
and the new parts of the house indicates that privacy among all the interior spaces was made a priority; the rear door to the old hall (originally an exterior door) closed this space off from the passage, and a new door gave access from the passage into the old inner room. This concern for privacy included the rooms above stairs; the original stair entrance from the hall was closed and the stairs straightened to be accessed from the new passage. Additionally, a lobby was created at the head of the stair. Now people could reach all six rooms independently from the passage.



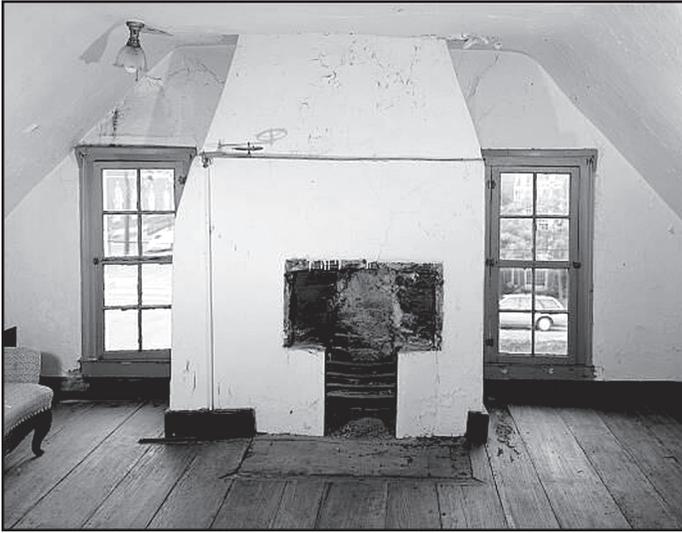
Murray-Dick-Fawcett House. First floor, west, parlor. Jeff Klee, 2017.

The 1790s joiners ornamented the hall chimneypiece and enclosed the cupboards with Baroque shelves that flanked it. They also made most of their new woodwork match that from the 1770s, so now variation is challenging to recognize. The building offers much surviving early detail. Crawling through a small doorway in the kneewall of the east/right-upper chamber, for example, one can see the rafters of the shed and a characteristic Chesapeake approach to covering the earlier roof with 2-1/2" to 4-1/4" by 18" shingles. An ornamental pull or "slide" and tubes for a servant bell wire remain beside the mantel frieze in the northwest room.

In a third stage, after John Douglass Brown bought the property in 1816 and before he took out an insurance policy in 1823, builders knocked down the old kitchen and constructed a specialized, brick-walled rear wing. From front to back, it contained a refined but unheated new room, a large cookroom with access to two rear attic chambers, two rear service rooms (one of them a smoke house), and an unusual arrangement of three privies. The refined room connected directly with a cellar stair, so it could be served drink from below and food from the kitchen, the latter perhaps indirectly from outside. Framing for the lost stair is visible in the north/rear cellar room. The room was soon subdivided by the insertion of a



Murray-Dick-Fawcett House. Privy. Jeff Klee, 2017.



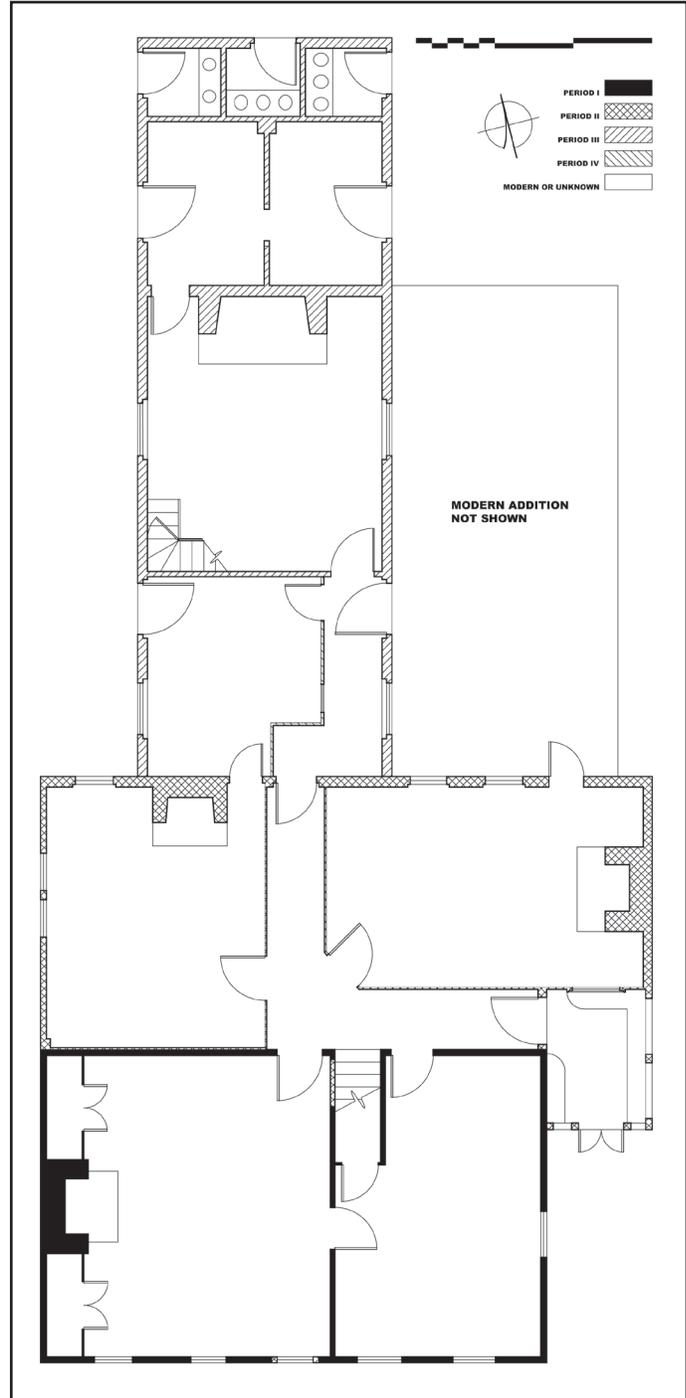
Murray-Dick-Fawcett House. Second floor, view of fireplace (coal) at the west end of west room. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS, n.d.

board wall to create a passage along its east side, running directly between the kitchen and service spaces and the six rooms in front. The inclusion of an interior window in the board wall suggests that the refined room might have been relegated to an office at this time: the office would have been placed in proximity to the kitchen, have exterior access via a door in its east wall, have cellar access, and communicated indirectly with the passage via the interior window and directly through a door. Alternatively, the refined room could also have continued to serve as a public space, with the passaged being inserted to shield its occupants from the movement of the staff from the service wing into the front room. In this scenario, the interior window would have served as a rob light providing air and light from windows in the east wall into the refined room, which now was somewhat closeted.

The two second-floor rooms are relatively plain but finished, probably for low-status members of the household or travelers. The two service rooms were both originally reached from the yard, not linked, and the clean, pantry-like west/left room also opens into the kitchen. The east/right room has been used for smoking meat.

Varying details in the privies make plausible the early Historic American Buildings Survey attribution of use by "slaves, men, women." Each has a door facing in a different direction. That on the east/right contains a child's seat and two for adults, and the lack of pointed cutouts at the front of the holes suggests this privy was intended for women.

Murray-Dick-Fawcett House. First Floor plan. Jeff Klee, 2018.



Old Presbyterian Meeting House or First Presbyterian Church

321 South Fairfax Street

1836-37, tower and steeple 1843, repaired 1929, 1950s, and 1988

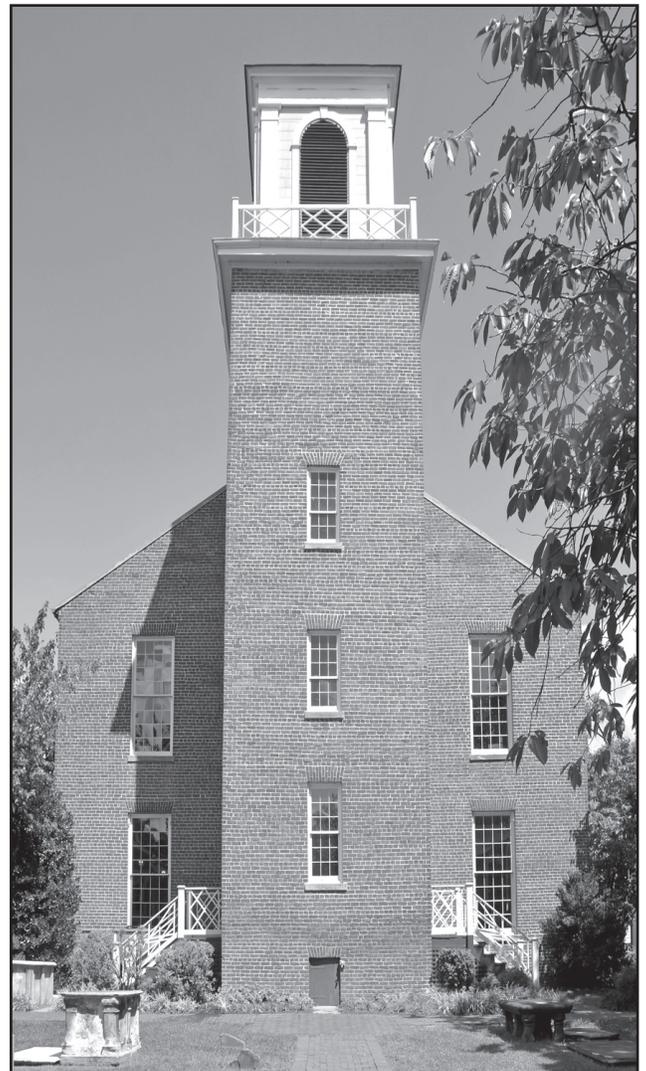
On July 26, 1835, lightning struck the steeple of the Presbyterian Church on South Fairfax Street. The original 1775 brick church, of which little is known, was in ruins. This church was the cultural custodian of the Presbyterian faith among the many Scots who settled in the port town in the late colonial period.

A larger two-story brick building measuring 50' x 73' was erected on the site in 1836-37 and portions of the original stone foundation remain under the current structure. The church is oriented with its shorter, pedimented, east gable entrance façade aligned with South Fairfax Street and the longer north and south walls extending westward toward the back of the lot where the burial ground is located. A 14' x 16' exterior bell tower, added in 1843, with a truncated wooden steeple is centered on the rear west gable end. A burial ground with many early stones dating to the period of the first house of worship occupies an area adjacent to the west end of the church. According to church records, over 300 individuals were buried here prior to 1804, when Alexandria's Common Council ended burials within city limits.

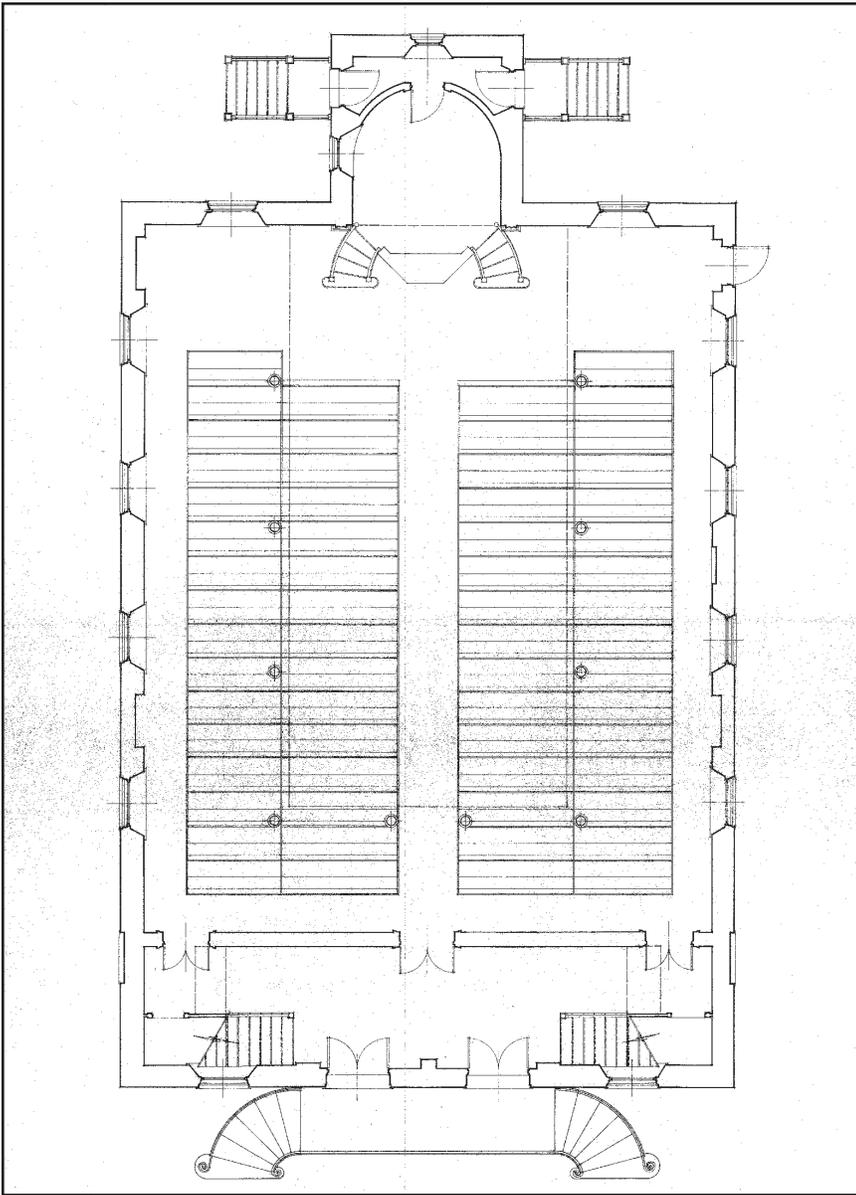
Standing on a raised cellar foundation of 1:3 bond with a stepped water table, the entrance façade is the most elaborate. Above the water table, the brickwork changes to Flemish bond laid with high quality face bricks of uniform color with sharp edges set in thin mortar joints. A three-course band of protruding brickwork with projecting headers in the middle course forms a cornice at the eaves and rake of the roof. In the center of the tympanum is a circular grilled opening.

The first story consists of four bays, a pair of double doors with transoms in the center two bays flanked by flat-headed, 16 over 16 windows in the outer two bays. The apertures feature stone sills and a

stone keystone in the center of the flat arches. The second story has four windows of the same configuration and alignment of the first-floor openings. Access to the two front doors is by way of granite stairs that curve upward on two sides to a central platform. The steps and platform are enclosed by iron railings on both sides, which follow the arc of the steps. This



*Old Presbyterian Meeting House. West elevation.
Carl Lounsbury, 2017.*



Old Presbyterian Meeting House. First Floor plan. J.L. Sibley Jennings, AIA & Associates Architects, 1988.

staircase was installed in 1853 replacing original wooden steps.

The north and south elevations consist of five bays with two tiers of flat-headed windows of the same size as those on the front (east) façade with 16 over 16 lights. Unlike the east façade, the flat jack arches have no keystones but do have stone sills. The side walls, as well as the rear gable end and tower, are laid in 1:3 bond with plainer stock bricks set in thicker mortar joints. The upper level of the rear wall and the upper stages of the tower change from 1:3 to 1:5 bond.

The church's axial plan is one favored by most Protestant denominations throughout the country in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, so there is little here in form or decorative elaboration to distinguish the building as Presbyterian. The two east doors open into a 10-foot-deep vestibule with corner staircases leading to the three galleries. The staircases themselves are said to have been rebuilt in 1929 when there was an effort to make the building appear more colonial when it was converted into a museum. Three pairs of double doors at the north and south ends and in the center provide access to the three aisles in the sanctuary. The ground floor is covered with two sets of paired slip pews, which face westward toward the pulpit on a dais located in a semicircular niche formed by the base of the west tower. The side aisles run along the north and south perimeter walls and provide access to the outermost sets of pews. There are two shallow alcoves near the corners of the north and south walls, which formerly contained stoves. The one in the northwest corner was reworked to provide a doorway for a handicap ramp.

The north, east, and south galleries are supported by wooden Tuscan columns that stand on plinths the height of the low pew backs. The gallery breastwork is paneled and carries an upper tier of columns that help support the framing of the flat ceiling over the gallery and the gently curved ceiling over the center of the sanctuary. In between the gallery columns are shorter wooden posts that were installed in 1853 to support the gas lighting fixtures. Seating in the gallery is tiered and the pew ends have scrolled arms typical of the period. A large organ fabricated by the Lively-Fulcher Organ Company in 1997 occupies most of the east gallery. The preaching dais in the apsidal niche formed from the west tower sustained alterations in the twentieth century. The niche is framed by pilasters and is capped by an architrave that follows the arched

domed opening. The three-sided pulpit was installed in 1940 and later modified, as were the stairs rising on either side from the sanctuary floor. In early-twentieth-century photographs, the area behind the pulpit was filled by an organ made by the prominent New York craftsman Henry Erben in 1849. In recent years, it has been moved back to this location. Early graining of the organ casing still survives in places. A door in the south side of the tower opens into the niche. A narrow passage at the back of the niche allows access by way of a ladder to the tower. When the west tower was added in 1843, a bell cast in Alexandria by the Smith Foundry was installed in the one-story framed steeple.

The declining fortunes of the congregation following the Civil War led to the closure in the late 1880s of First Presbyterian or Union Church, as it was sometimes known during the period. The care of the old

building was placed with the congregation of the Second Presbyterian Church, which was located on the corner of Prince and St. Asaph Street near the Murray-Dick-Fawcett House. By the 1920s, the building needed serious repairs due to neglect. It was restored by a host of civic and patriotic groups in the late-1920s and reopened as a museum and shrine to the Revolutionary period, and it was rechristened the Old Presbyterian Meeting House. A new congregation established in 1949 carried out a series of renovations in the 1950s led by architect Walter Macomber, the Architect for Restoration at George Washington's Mount Vernon for many years. This work included the renewal of plasterwork and the installation of a modern heating system, replacing the ancient stoves that had stood in the side aisles. Additional repairs were made to structural and mechanical systems in the late-1980s to put the structure on sound footing for a growing congregation.



Old Presbyterian Meeting House. Interior looking to west end. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS. n.d.

209 Prince Street

1780s, early nineteenth century

209 Prince Street was built, remarkably, on a Philadelphian plan in the 1780s. Like many of the houses built for wealthy merchants in post-Revolutionary Alexandria, its layout places two well-finished rooms alongside a passage. Unlike most of them, however, it locates the stair in a short connector behind the rear room, where it adjoins the kitchen. This arrangement is common in Philadelphia, where the connector containing the principal stair is known as a piazza. The presence of such a house in Virginia testifies to the con-

nections between the first national capital and its future home on the Potomac.

The house sits on property that was owned by Captain John Harper, a Quaker merchant who removed from Philadelphia in 1773 to Alexandria, where he established a firm trading in the West Indies and South America. He owned several parcels on this block and his warehouse stood at the bottom of Prince Street, near the surviving warehouse at the corner of South Union Street. Beginning in 1789, the

house was rented to Dr. James Craik, one of the attending physicians at the death of George Washington and also owner of La Grange in Port Tobacco, MD. Its exterior finishes are handsome, with carved stone jack arches above all the front windows and a fine modillion cornice. Inside, the early finishes include restrained, conventional, late-Georgian woodwork with some later improvements, such as the mantel in the ground floor front room.

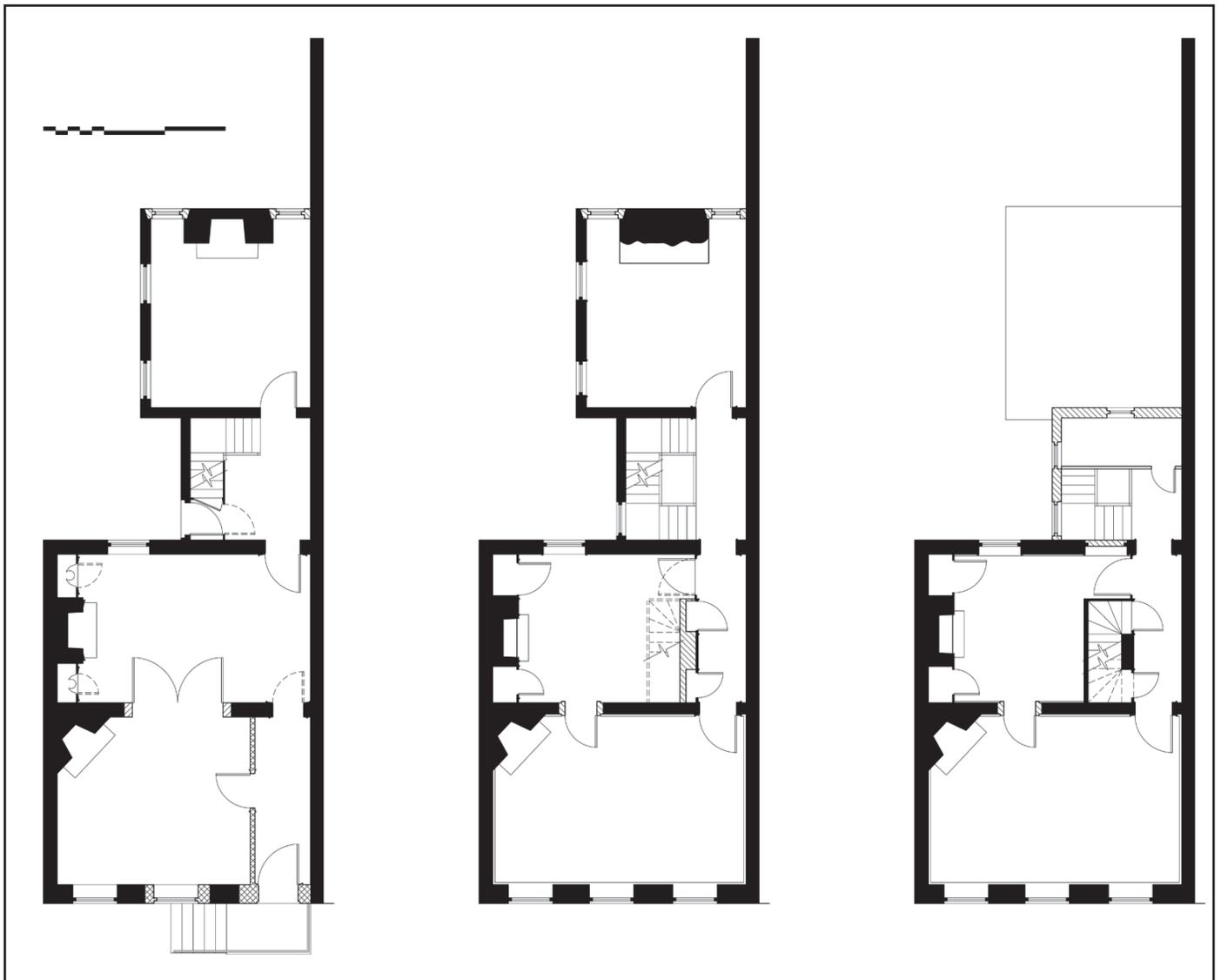
Originally, access from the street led directly into the front room. There is evidence for a central door in closers that run to the floor level on either side of the present center window. Communica-



209 Prince Street. Exterior view. Jeff Klee, 2017.

tion between the front room and the rear room was likely through a door in the present opening at the back of the passage. Originally, the rear room was the best finished space in the house, with a fully paneled fireplace wall. Handsome buffets flanking the fireplace and its proximity to the kitchen in the rear wing, beyond the piazza, suggest that this was the dining room. The original use of the front room is unknown, although the direct access from the street suggests that it had a relatively public, professional function rather than a domestic one. There are several houses in the lower blocks of Prince Street with center doors. Their proximity to Alexandria's wharves and the warehouses along South Union Street raises the possibility that they may have had a mercantile function.

At some point in the early-nineteenth century, the front of the house was reconfigured to permit an arrangement common to polite houses in the Anglo-Atlantic, with a side door providing access to a passageway that opened into the two principal ground floor rooms. The old center door was made into a window and a new partition was inserted to separate the new side passage from the ground floor front room, now surely converted from commercial to domestic purposes. The new passage stopped short of the dining room, requiring visitors to continue to move through the dining room to access the principal stair. Several decades later, a broad elliptical arch was broken through the brick partition and cased with a simple Greek Revival architrave, joining the two ground floor rooms in the manner of a double parlor.



209 Prince Street. First, second, and third floor plans from left to right. Drawn by Jeff Klee, 2018.

Though little of its original fabric survives, the kitchen was in the rear ell behind the piazza. The principal stair wound up in the piazza but originally stopped at the second floor, where it provided access to a small bedchamber over the kitchen as well as the upper floor of the front block. In the front, at the end of a narrow passage from the piazza, one large room consumes the entire width of the house, likely the best parlor. Though the finishes are not as impressive as the dining room paneling, the cornice and crossetted over-mantel are consistent with a public function. As originally configured, this room did not communicate with the small room behind. This was seemingly a bedchamber, with a pair of closets flanking a modestly finished firebox. Originally, this space was about three feet narrower, because the narrow stair to the

third floor and the attic wound up inside it, with access from the passage. The third-floor layout follows that of the second, with a large bedchamber fronting on a much smaller one and access to both via a narrow passage.

In the late nineteenth century, the service wing was enlarged to two full stories and the piazza raised to permit access from the principal stair to the three main floors of the house. At this time, the winder stair from the second to the third floor was removed to enlarge the smaller of the two rooms and a new door was cut between them for the first time. The house was sympathetically modernized in the 1970s, though some adjustments to the chair rail are apparent in the second floor.



209 Prince Street. Full paneling on the fireplace wall.
Drawn by Jeff Klee, 2017.

806 Prince Street

1850-52, rear kitchen addition ca. 1880

Located on the south side of Prince Street amid an eclectic block of mostly brick, residential two- and three-story row houses that reflect over a century of changing styles in Alexandria, sits a five-bay, three-story, Italianate structure with distinctive cast iron balconies and brownstone details. Though originally built as a private residence for one extended family, its generous proportions have allowed it to serve many functions over its lifetime, including hospital, veterans home, museum, school, and community meeting space.

In 1850, Reverend James T. Johnston, Rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, bought two lots with the intention of building a house for his wife and her widowed sister and children. The completed house eventually reflected a mixture of tradition and the fashion of both its time and place.

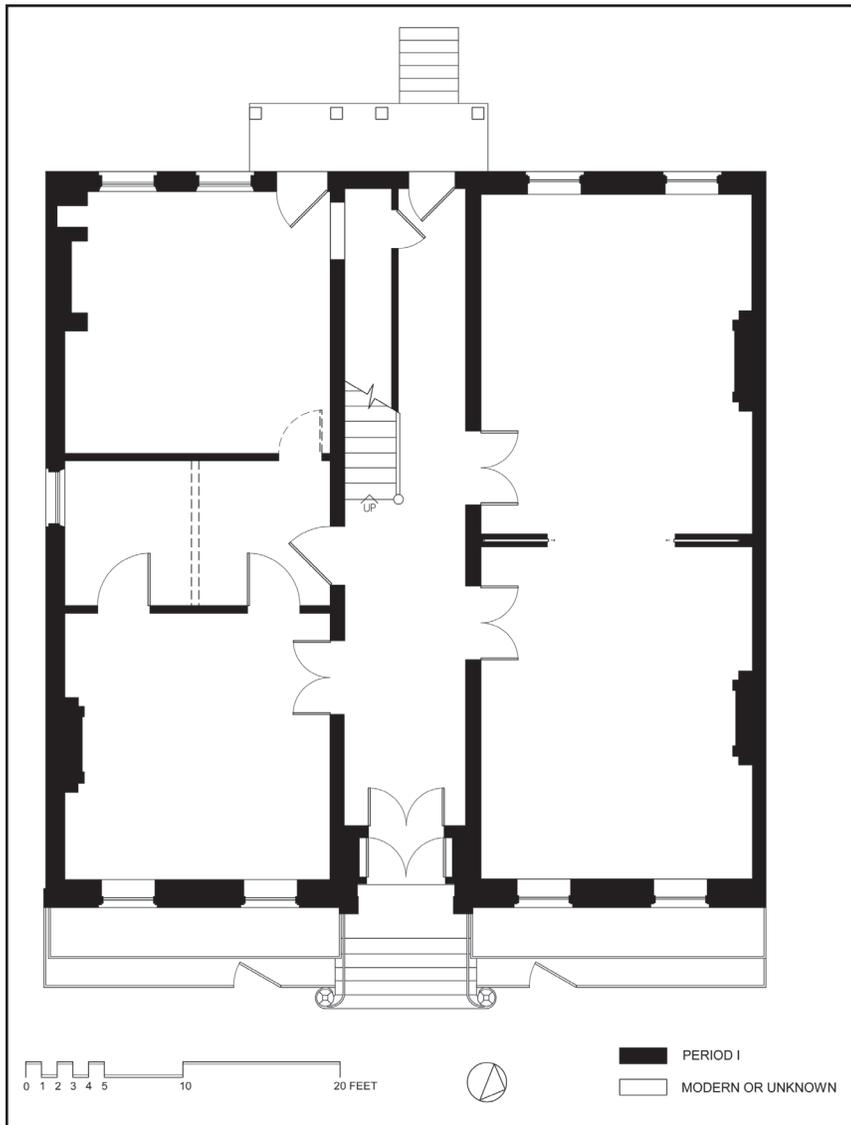
The most striking feature of the structure at 806 Prince Street is its massing. Taking advantage of the double urban lot, the five-bay-wide house utilizes a center-passage plan that makes it distinct on the block, but also sets it apart from most of its contemporaries, which overwhelmingly feature side-hall plans. The width of the front elevation is emphasized by the prominent front door, which consists of a large,

rectangular, transom over a set of paired wooden doors with raised octagonal panels. Broad Tuscan pilasters support a flattened brownstone pediment over a blocky, undecorated frieze, creating a visually-prominent portico that is the focal point of the street elevation.

This Renaissance treatment of the entrance is repeated in the pediments and lintels on all of the windows on this elevation. The louvered shutters and thick vertical lintels are painted a rusty brown to complement the running bond brick and brownstone details, giving



806 Prince Street. Exterior view of the building ca. 1960s, with the "Confederate Veterans" sign still in place over the front door. Courtesy of the Alexandria Public Library, Special Collections.



806 Prince Street. First floor plan.
 Drawn by Willie Graham and
 Ken Short, 2017-18.

and Classical Revival townhouses up and down the eastern seaboard.

The interior of the double-pile, center-passage plan allows for spacious rooms where much of the original detail survives. The east parlor is currently a private apartment for the site caretaker, and though it has evolved to support modern needs, it retains many classically styled architectural elements. In the west parlor, many of these original details are clearly visible, including marble mantels, large and heavily undercut plaster cornices and fluted columns with decorative capitals that divide the room into two separate spaces and house the large wood paneled pocket doors. With generously scaled 12 foot ceilings, the west parlor gives the impression of grandeur. The floors appear to be the original pine, but were

the structure an overall monochromatic and monolithic appearance which underscores its mass. The heavy cornice has prominent paired decorative brackets set under a deep overhang.

The windows of the building are also quite distinctive. The four first-floor windows open onto cast iron balconies and are fitted with four-over-six, double-hung sash having a wide vertical muntin that visually emphasizes the height of the openings. The horizontal muntins are very light in comparison, making them recede visually, making the panes seem larger than they are. Each of the upper stories has similarly-scaled panes, but the windows decrease in size from four-over-four on the second floor to two-over-two on the third floor. This pattern of fenestration exaggerates the height of the building with its forced perspective recalling both Federal

likely covered with carpeting as evidenced by the nail marks at the edges of the room.

In the rear of the structure is a kitchen addition, likely added around 1880 as indicated by a manufacturer's plaque on the oven, to replace a separate kitchen outbuilding in the yard. There are also some ghost marks on the wall above the back door that allude to structural changes over time. The basement, however, provides the most insight into the overall evolution of the site. Under the east half of the house are three to four foot high stone foundation blocks made of Alexandria cobblestone, which City Architects Al Cox and Peter Smith note was not being used after 1820. Hence 806 Prince Street was likely built at least partially on top of an older structure that was demolished. A barred storage room survives in the rear of the

west cellar room. The upper stories of the building are divided into several small private apartments and a museum housing Civil War relics, reminders of when this building served as the R.E. Lee Camp of Confederate Veterans in the early twentieth century.

While the house was built for Reverend Johnston's family use in the mid-nineteenth century, it had a tumultuous history in the late nineteenth century. On May 23, 1861, the city of Alexandria voted to secede from the Union. Because of its strategic location and recent history as part of the District of Columbia, Federal troops occupied the city on May 24 and seized many privately-owned buildings including the Johnston house. Union troops established a network of hospitals throughout Alexandria city, and 806 and its neighbor across the street (811 Prince Street) eventually become the Prince Street General Hospital where soldiers were sent for long-term recovery during the war. At the start of the federal occupation, the Johnstons fled to Richmond and, in 1864, were unable to pay the taxes on the property at which point they sold the house to Lucius Crittenden, Treasurer General of the United States, who leased the house to the postmaster of Alexandria, Mr. Massey. In October of 1865, five months after the end of the war, Reverend Johnston was able to repurchase the property and willed it to his wife. In 1875, it was sold to Mrs. Johnston's nephew, Col. Julius De Lagnel; his mother and Mrs. Johnston resided in the house until their deaths in the 1880s.

In 1903, the house was sold to the R.E. Lee Camp of Confederate Veterans for use as a residence for Civil War veterans and widows. In 1906, a room was set aside on the second floor to store Civil War artifacts and memorabilia, which was eventually opened to the public as a museum in 1915. This collection is still available to view by appointment.

By 1919, the population of Civil War veterans had dwindled, and the Lee Camp organization looked for other support. The Mary Custis Lee Chapter #7 (founded in the 1890s in Lloyd House at 220 North Washington Street, site of Friday night's reception) and 17th Virginia Regiment Chapter #41 of the United Daughters of Confederacy (UDC) merged to take ownership of 806 Prince Street, taking final possession in 1924. The society defined itself as a ladies benevolent organization dedicated to history, educa-

tion, and patriotism. A major focus of the national UDC charity work throughout the twentieth century had been service to military and war veterans, selling war bonds, volunteering at veteran hospitals, and providing scholarships and awards to military academy graduates, but the organization also erected monuments commemorating the Confederacy and the Confederate army all over the south.

Well into the late-twentieth century, the organization maintained a relatively low profile, until a patent application for their insignia was challenged in Congress in 1992, and heated debates began about the connection between the UDC and other Confederate-history organizations and the post-Reconstruction-era legacy of racism. Today, the structure at 806 still houses the UDC and hosts civic meetings, social gatherings, and occasional visitors to the museum.



806 Prince Street, close-up view of the door surround, window hoods and ironwork. Courtesy of the Alexandria Public Library Special Collections.

St. Joseph's Catholic Church

711 North Columbus Street

1915 -16

St. Joseph's Church is a milestone in the long history of the African-American Catholic community of Alexandria, and it is also a good example of a traditional ecclesiastical design being adapted to twentieth-century building materials. Prior to the Civil War, enslaved Catholics attended St. Mary's church, but after emancipation, freed black Catholics were segregated to St. Mary's Lyceum (313 Duke Street). In 1913, Thomas Blair, a sexton at St. Mary's, formed a committee to explore the possibility of establishing a new parish for African Americans in Northern Virginia. Josephite Father Charles F. Hannigan, who traveled almost weekly from Richmond to minister to African-American Catholics, is credited with introducing Saint Katharine Drexel to the need for a Catholic parish to serve African Americans. Mother Drexel, a descendant of a wealthy Philadelphia banking family, established the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament in

Philadelphia, PA, in 1891, and one of the Sisters' primary missions focused on ministering to African Americans in the South and West. The introduction proved to be beneficial.

On March 8, 1915, the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament signed an agreement with Richmond Bishop Denis J. O'Connell donating \$8,000 to the Richmond Diocese for the construction of a church on North Columbus Street. The community began the challenging task of raising the additional funds needed for construction. On June 11, 1915, the Society of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart of Baltimore, commonly known as The Josephites, appointed Father Joseph J. Kelly, SSJ, as pastor of St. Joseph's in Alexandria. Four months later, on October 8, 1915, ground was broken for the new church at the corner of North Columbus and Wythe Streets, and the building was dedicated by Bishop O'Connell on May 14, 1916.



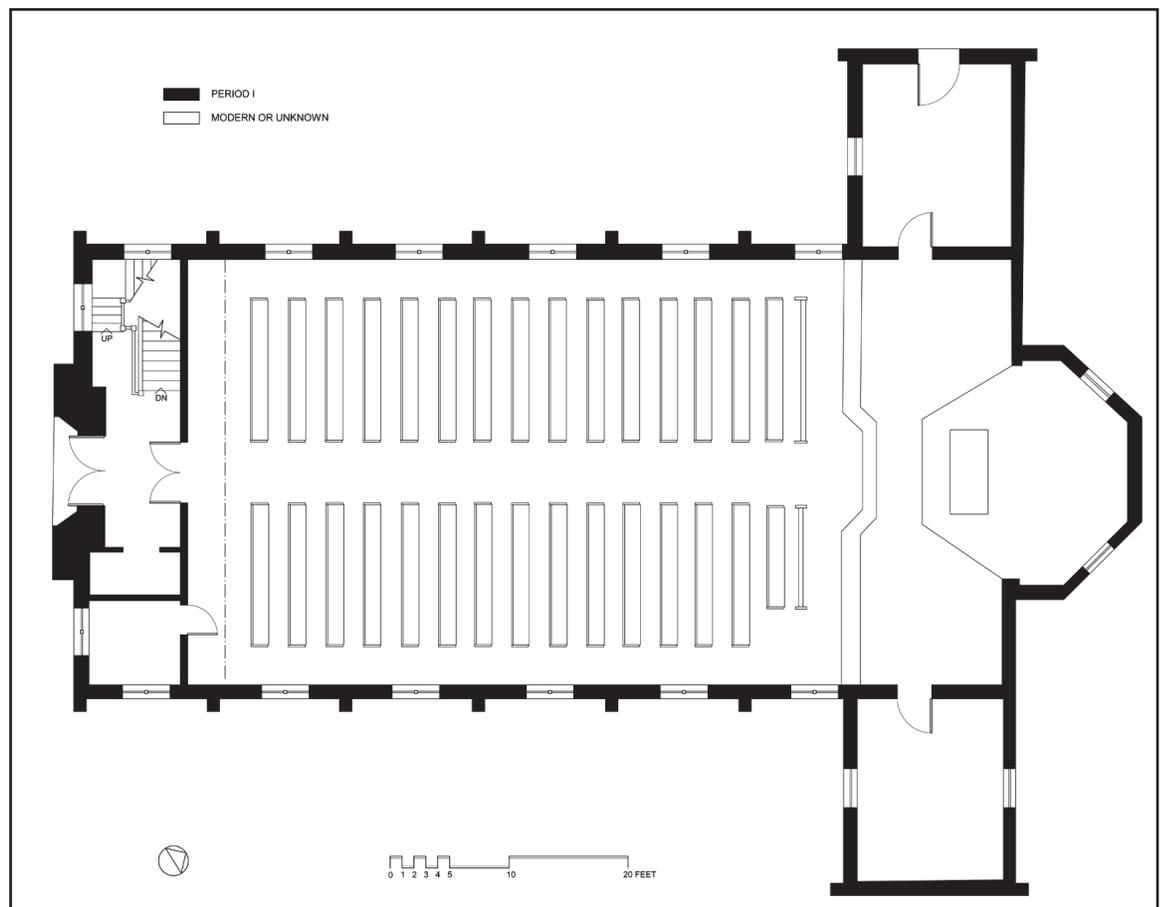
St. Joseph's Catholic Church. Ken Short, 2018.

The modest, red brick, English Gothic Revival church sits on a raised cellar foundation. It has a simple cruciform plan that is more visibly reflected on the building's exterior than in its interior configuration. The brick walls of the church are laid in running bond and are ornamented with concrete embellishments, a modest alternative to stone, at the window sills, parapet caps, water table and main entry, creating a polychromatic effect on the church's exterior. The primary (west), three bay, gable end faces North Columbus Street and is defined by a slightly projecting bell tower. A recessed double-entry door with its concrete compound arch molding is centered on the facade. Flanking the main entry are two pointed-arch window openings with tracery containing stained glass. The arch of each window opening is defined by a double-course of headers from the spring line to the crown and a concrete sill. A concrete niche, holding a statue of the patron saint, is centered above the doors. Above the niche is a recessed, round opening with a quatrefoil window. Finally, the tower brickwork steps in with concrete caps and pinnacles and culminates in a shallow four-sided rectangular tower with a rounded arch in each side with the bell centered in the space.

The secondary (north and south) elevations consist of six bays defined by small brick buttresses with concrete caps. Each bay consists of a pointed-arch window opening at the sanctuary level with the same brick treatment as the primary façade. Centered below each arch window opening and the concrete water table at the parish hall level are a pair of double-hung windows. These windows have a flat arch and a concrete sill at grade. The transepts projecting on either side of the sanctuary echo the same treatment as the other elevations with a single arched window opening on each elevation with a single, rectangular opening below the water table. The top of the arch is filled with brick and the rectangular window opening contains a stained-glass window in almost every instance. A shallow, five-sided apse marks the east façade of the building and has pointed windows on two of the facets.

The main block contains the narthex, nave and sanctuary. The narthex, tucked below a choir loft, is divided between a vestibule, stair passage and small room, and opens into a 35' x 69' nave. The nave has a high gable ceiling featuring exposed scissor trusses and a center aisle flanked by rows

*St. Joseph 's
Catholic Church.
First Floor plan.
Drawn by
Ken Short, 2018.*



of pews with lancet-shaped ends; there are smaller side aisles along the walls. The sanctuary at the east end of the nave extends into the apse, which opens with a large pointed arch. The altar is free standing atop a three-step platform. The tabernacle sits on a small engaged stand below a large crucifix; pointed arched windows pierce the angled facets of the apse. Statuary flanks the apse, highlighted by painted pointed arches. The statue to the south (right) is St. Martin de Pores, the patron of racial harmony.

The two arms of the transept measuring 15' x 15' are connected to the sanctuary by doors set in recessed pointed arches. The room to the north is the sacristy, which originally served as living quarters for Father Kelly. A parish hall is located

below the main sanctuary and was utilized as a school from 1916–1931.

In 1921, the rectory was constructed immediately adjacent to the north side of the church. In 1931, St. Joseph's opened a four-room, Art Deco, concrete school building that was situated north of the rectory. The Oblate Sisters of Providence of Washington, D.C. staffed the school until its closure in 1969. Today, a daycare is housed in the former school building.

In 1967, St. Joseph's became a parish with territorial boundaries, rather than an ethnic parish serving African-American Catholics. The Josephites are the only order of priests and brothers to serve this parish.



*St. Joseph's
Catholic Church.
Sanctuary interior
looking east. Carl
Lounsbury, 2017.*

209 South Saint Asaph Street

ca. 1851

Alexandria experienced a building boom in the early 1850s, adding over 700 dwellings to the city. As Ethelyn Cox writes in *Historic Alexandria, Virginia: Street by Street* (1976): "The stagnation and dullness which had prevailed here before had given way to economic prosperity. The miserable skeletons of antiquated buildings are metamorphosed into large, neat and substantial edifices which are useful and ornamental."

The elegant, three-story brick rowhouse at 209 South Saint Asaph Street is a product of this prosperity. In 1851 when William N. McVeigh, a prominent merchant and banker, purchased the lot at 209, the deed noted an existing frame tenement. McVeigh already owned the adjacent brick dwelling at 211, and he built the fashionable house at 209 in the Greek Revival idiom and styled 211 to match, creating a continuous, modern streetscape.

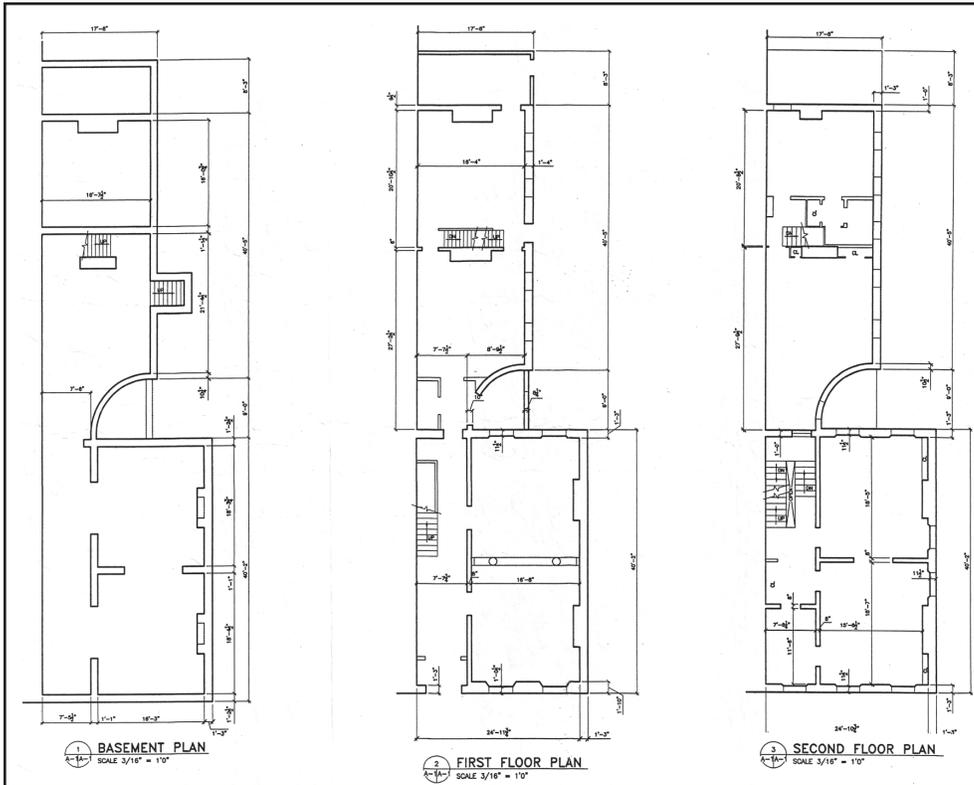
During the Civil War, the building served as the residence of Brigadier General John Potts Slough, the military governor of Alexandria. At the end of the war, the McVeighs, who had fled to Richmond,

sued to reclaim possession of their house, which took nearly a decade to resolve in Federal District Court. In 1897, Laurence Stabler and Lucy Chandler Leadbetter purchased the house; both were descendents of the original owners of the Stabler-Leadbetter Apothecary Shop, which is also highlighted on the VAF Alexandria tour.

The residence at 209 reflects the affluence of the builder and the emphasis on ornamentation and fine materials seen in mid-nineteenth century Alexandria. An ornate, modillion cornice crowns the pressed brick façade, and a double-leaf door, surmounted by a transom and framed by a bold architrave, reveals the side-passage plan of the interior. The house stands on a raised basement, with a brownstone stoop embellished with decorative ironwork. A vestibule serves as a transition between the entry and the stair hall, which includes high baseboards, molded chair rail and an elaborate plaster cornice and medallion accenting the crystal chandelier. The open-string stair features a substantial turned newel post and turned balusters, and gracefully curves at each landing and floor.

209-211 South St. Asaph Street.
View from the northeast
showing rear ell. 1960s.
Courtesy of the Alexandria
Public Library Special Collections.





209 South St. Asaph Street. First Floor Plan. Drawn by Woods Peacock Engineering Consultants, 2000.

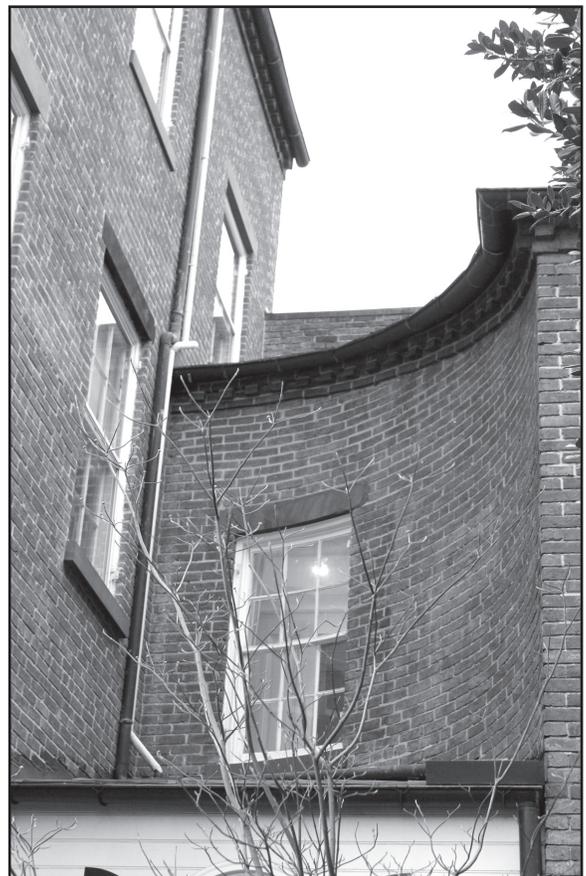
Corinthian columns and plain pilasters visually divide the two adjacent parlors, but in essence the rooms create one flowing space: the culmination of the practice of joining adjacent parlors that began in the early-nineteenth century. The space, encircled by a fine plaster cornice, features two carved, gray-marble, elliptical-arch mantels and early, twin brass chandeliers, which hang from plaster medallions with acanthus leaves. Four-paneled wood doors with period hardware and bull's eye molding allow the double-parlor to be closed from the stair hall. Paneled interior shutters provide privacy from the sidewalk and street, and a jib door at the back of the parlor leads to the rear garden.

The original service ell joins the main block of the house by means of an unusual curved wall that allows the rear parlor and rear chamber on the second floor to each have two windows overlooking the garden. Typical of the Alexandria house plan, the ell contains a dining room with a fireplace, and beyond it, a service stair and a kitchen that has been modernized. The dining room plan responds to the curved wall, and the space is richly detailed with a similar arched marble mantel, and high

baseboards. A shallow grid, meant to evoke coffering, was recently applied to the ceiling. Original pine floorboards are found throughout the house. The stout first floor framing and stone foundations are visible in the cellar of the main block.

The house at 209 is an excellent example of mid-nineteenth residential construction for the upper class, and its original plan and detailing remain highly intact.

209 South St. Asaph Street. Connection between the ell to the main block. The unusual curve allows the rear rooms of the main block to have two windows. Carl Lounsbury, 2017.



Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary

105-107 South Fairfax Street
1805, 1815, ca. 1851, late 1930s

The Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary comprises two early nineteenth-century commercial buildings associated with a pharmacy and a wholesale drug business run by the Stabler and Leadbeater families in this location from 1805 until 1933. The building at 107 South Fairfax Street is the older of the two, and it was built for Edward Stabler in 1805 to house his apothecary shop. The adjacent building at 105 South Fairfax Street was constructed in 1815, and Edward Stabler acquired it in 1829. The buildings display key distinctions that mark the transition from Federal architecture, with its roots in the eighteenth century, to Greek Revival, which was to mature in the following decades.

The three-and-one-half-story, three-bay, brick buildings are separated by a party wall and stand within a row of four nineteenth-century brick buildings, all of which were at one time associated with the Stabler-Leadbeater pharmacy business. The 107 South Fairfax (built 1805) displays the planar façade characteristic of the Federal period. The building lacks a basement and water table, although the brickwork is laid in three-course common bond in the first six courses above ground before changing to Flemish. The bricks of the earlier building are slightly squatter and the joints a bit thicker than those of 105 South Fairfax (built 1815), causing the coursing of the two buildings to match at ground level, but quickly fall out of alignment as the walls rise. The overall story heights of 107 are taller, which makes the building taller, and places the fenestration higher than the corresponding windows of 105, despite the fact that the window openings themselves on 105 are taller. The

window openings in 107 are headed with flat jack arches, in comparison to the stone lintels and bullseye corner blocks used in the Greek-revival building, an arrangement that will dominate in the next decade. Both buildings have molded brick cornices, a transitional characteristic that will be replaced in later Greek-revival buildings by a simplified, corbeled brick cornice.



Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary. Historic View. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS. n.d.



Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary. View of hoist wheel in attic of 107 South Fairfax. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS. n.d.

Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary. Interior view of 107 South Fairfax. Courtesy of Historic Alexandria.



The present storefronts are the third in the buildings' histories and date to the late 1930s. Designed by renowned architect and historian Thomas T. Waterman based on architectural evidence, both storefronts incorporate early-nineteenth-century woodwork that was stored in the buildings. The upper stories of 107 South Fairfax Street are an amazing survival of Federal-period commercial architecture, while the upper stories of 105 South Fairfax Street no less impressively reflect the influence of the Greek-revival style.

The interior of the first-floor shop in 107 South Fairfax Street is an outstanding example of a nineteenth-century retail space. Most of the built-in shelving, counters, and furniture were installed in or before 1851, with some display furniture added in the late nineteenth century. The buildings' upper floors illustrate the behind-the-scenes operations of a retail pharmacy and small-scale wholesale drug company. Historically used as work and storage areas, these spaces have minimal interior finishes and contain a wide variety of built-in shelving, work counters, and office furniture associated with the Stabler-Leadbeater business. The attic of 105 South Fairfax Street features an early nineteenth-century hoist used to move goods between the floors of the building.

A ca. 2005 renovation updated the HVAC equipment throughout the buildings and made alterations to the 105 South Fairfax building, allowing tours to proceed on the upper floors for the first time since it opened as a museum in 1939. The spaces in 107 South Fairfax were maintained in their original state as much as possible to preserve the historic retail shop and manufacturing spaces.

Wilkes Street Railroad Tunnel

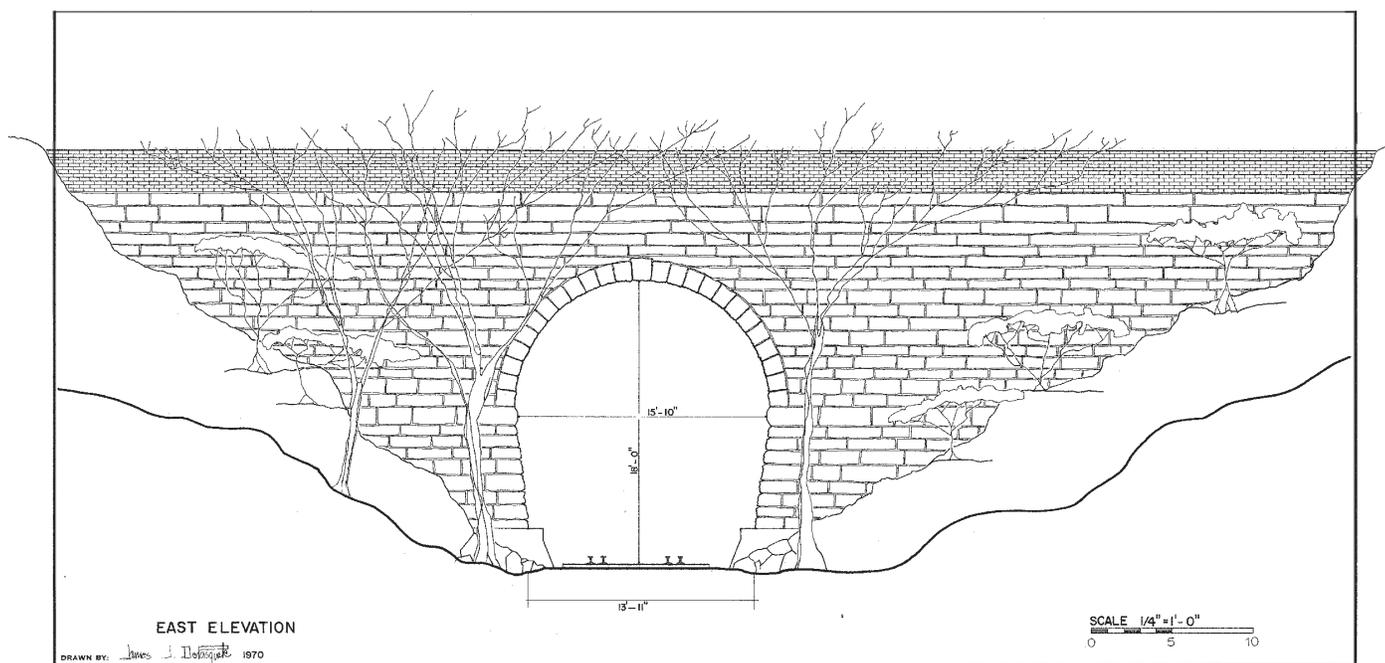
Wilkes Street, between South Royal and Union Streets

1851- 56, 2008

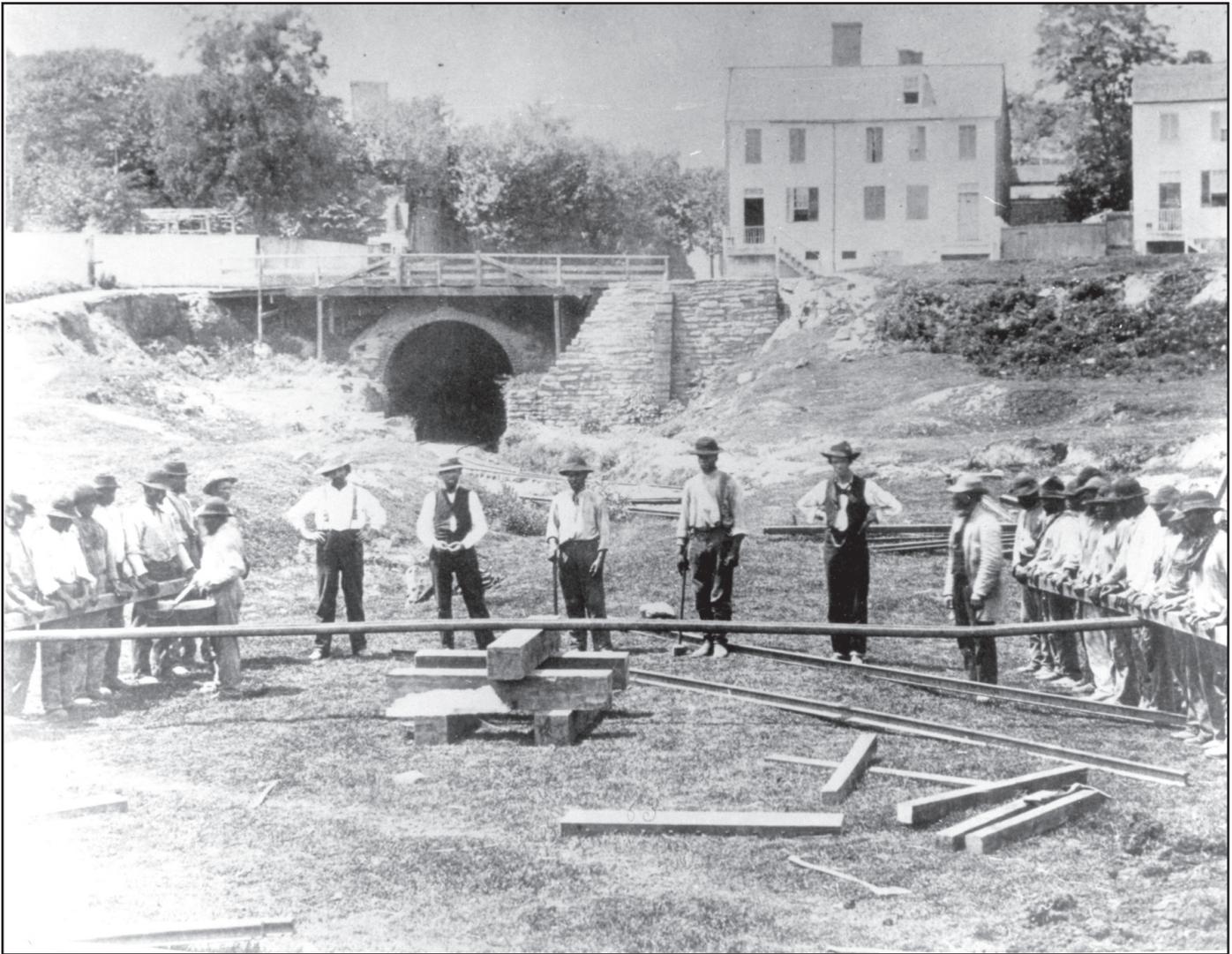
The Wilkes Street Tunnel is one of the two remaining vestiges of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad history in Alexandria (Hoof's Run Bridge to the west at Duke and Dangerfield Streets being the other). The tunnel measures 170 feet in length, 17 feet in height, and 15 feet in width—just large enough to accommodate a single train track running from the Potomac River wharves to inland markets in Virginia and Western Maryland. The vault is constructed of dry-laid, broken-coursed, cut gray sandstone quarried at the Little Falls of the Potomac. The tunnel crown is a circular brick arch. The tunnel portals on the western approach have wingwalls constructed of the sandstone capped with brick parapet walls with a recessed panel and extend to South Royal Street. The tunnel was built through the bluff overlooking the Potomac River utilizing the cut-and-cover tunnel construction method. First a cut was excavated along the route of Wilkes Street,

then the brick and stone vault was built within the cut, finally the cut was back filled covering the tunnel and reestablishing the ground level. This method had the least impact on the homes on the bluff during construction.

Railroads defined Alexandria's landscape from the mid-nineteenth century through the early part of the twentieth century and allowed Alexandria to become a regional economic hub. The Wilkes Street Tunnel, while not complete, opened in May 1851 as part of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, linking the waterfront wharves of Alexandria to Orange, Virginia. After some construction delays, the tunnel was completed in 1856. In 1872, the O&ARR merged with other smaller lines to create the Virginia Midland Railroad, which in 1875 constructed a railroad car ferry linking Alexandria with Shepherds Landing (now White Plains Sewage



Wilkes Street Tunnel. Drawn by James J. Delasquak, Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HAER. 1968.



Wilkes Street Tunnel. Civilian laborers. Special Collections, Alexandria Library, ca. 1856.

Treatment Plant) across the Potomac in Maryland, which by the 1890s was part of the vast regional network of the B&O Railroad. The neighborhood along Wilkes Street eventually built up with simple frame houses became known as Tunneltown in the nineteenth century and was part of an antebellum African-American neighborhood along South Royal Street called Hayti.

While the last train passed through the tunnel in 1975, it has seen much use as a biking and pedestrian path since its rehabilitation by the city in 2008. As part of this project, 54 circumferential steel reinforcement ribs were fitted in the vault, modern electrical lighting was installed, and an asphalt path was laid over the original track bed making for smooth walking or riding beneath Wilkes Street.

718 Wolfe Street

ca. 1830

Standing on the southeast corner of Wolfe and South Columbus Streets are a pair of two-story framed rowhouses. Modest in size and ornamentation, they represent the kind of accommodations occupied by small shop owners, clerks, and artisans in the city in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Open to the VAF is the westernmost house on the corner, number 718. Like its twin, the front façade consists of three bays, two windows lighting the front entertaining room and a transomed doorway that opens onto a side stair passage. The front section of the house extends 24 ½ feet in width

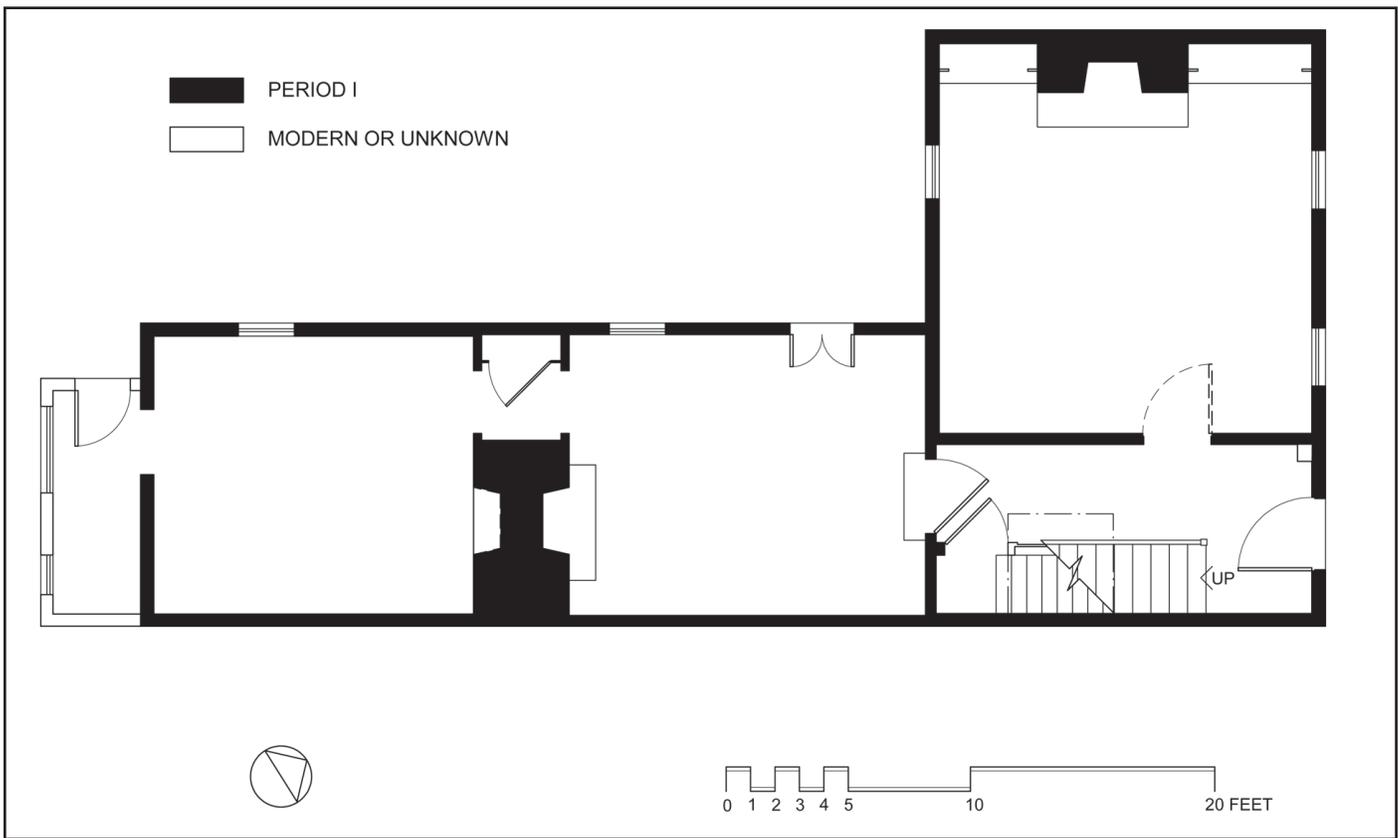
across the Wolfe Street facade and is 16 ½ feet deep. Behind, there is a lower, two-story wing at right angles that abuts the party wall between the two houses. The 12' x 23' wing contains two rooms on each floor. The party wall between the two houses retains its brick fill or nogging, providing a measure of fireproofing. An internal chimney on the west gable end heated the first and second floor rooms in the front of the house and another internal chimney warmed the four rooms in the rear wing. The house is framed and finished with sash sawn material with mature cut nails throughout.



718 Wolfe Street. Main block and rear ell. Andrea Tracey, 2018.

The plan of the house consists of a side stair passage, which measures seven feet in width and provides access to the front entertaining room. The open-string staircase rises along the east party wall and has a turned newel post, oval handrail, and square one-inch balusters. Upstairs is a bedchamber over the front room and another pair of rooms in the back wing. On the ground floor, the front room is plastered and has a relatively plain mantel with molded pilasters, plain frieze, and molded shelf. The mantel and architrave moldings are quirked Greek ones with flat ovolos. In typical Alexandria fashion, through the doorway at the back of the stair passage is a 16' x 12' dining room, which is

two steps below the level of the front of the house. A fireplace is located at the south end of the room and has an enriched chimneypiece that is far more elaborate than the one in the front room and was probably installed by a subsequent owner in more recent years. The room behind the dining room is now a modern kitchen, but was once a heated room that may have served the same function, especially if there was not a detached structure in the rear yard. There is an unheated stone and brick-walled cellar beneath most of the house, which was probably used for storage since there appears to have been no fireplaces in these spaces.



718 Wolfe Street. First Floor Plan. Drawn by Ken Short, 2018.

Appendix 1: Ramsey Homes

*699 North Patrick Street
1941-42*

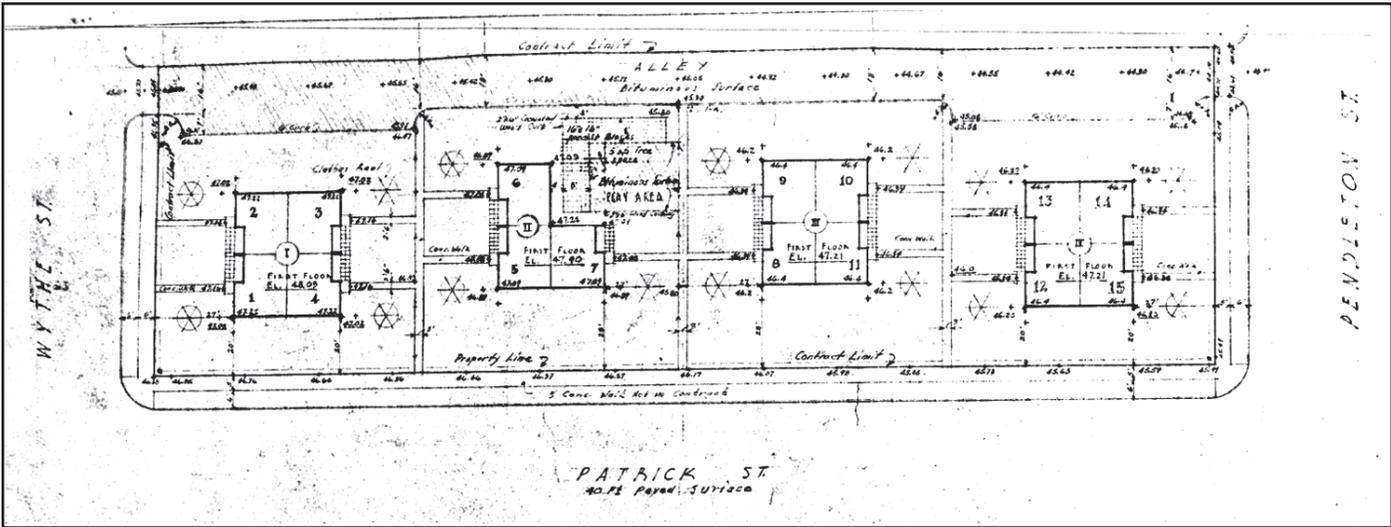
Ramsey Homes is included as an appendix because, at the time of printing, demolition is imminent for this important part of Alexandria's African-American twentieth-century history. The committee will provide a status update at the Wednesday opening event. Unfortunately, even if the property is still extant, interior access will not be possible.

The Ramsey Homes were built as Alexandria Defense Housing Project VA 44133 in 1941-42 for African-American defense workers under the Lanham Act for the United States Housing

Authority. Under the Lanham Act, permanent war housing projects built in Alexandria included Chinquapin Village, Cameron Valley and Ramsey Homes, as well as wartime nursery schools, including the Carver Nursery at 224 North Fayette Street. The site was across the street from the first Parker-Gray School which served African-American students in Grades 1-8 and adjacent to the segregated Alexandria Library which opened in 1940 following the 1939 sit-in at the main library. The four buildings that comprised the Ramsey project included three quadplexes and one triplex providing 15 two-story dwelling units in an early Modernist design.

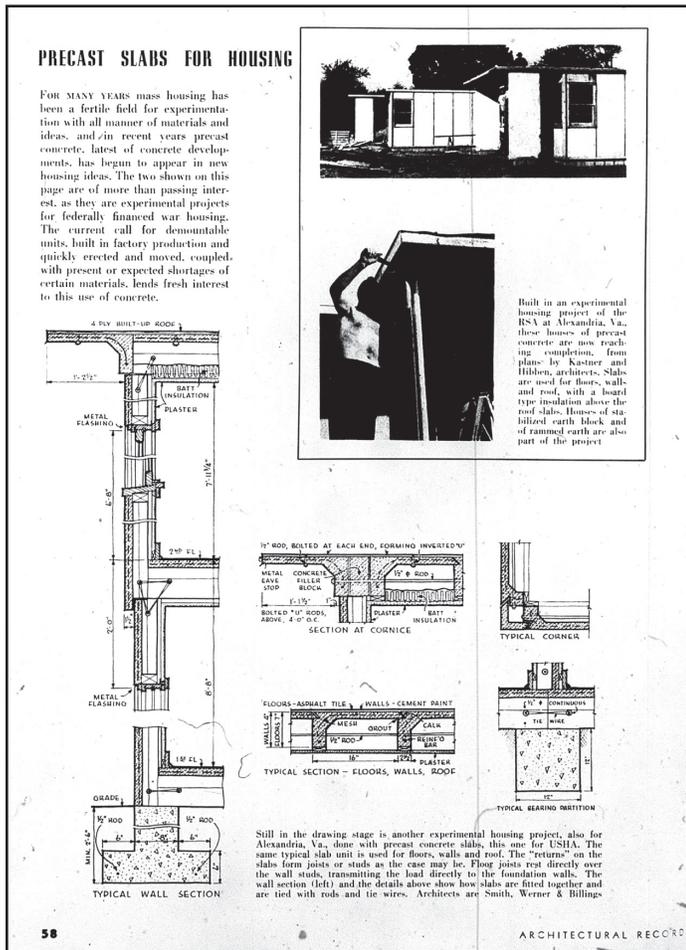


Ramsey Homes. Christine Henry, 2018.



Ramsey Homes. Site plan of Ramsey Homes by Smith, Werner and Billings, Oct. 10, 1941. Courtesy of the Alexandria Department of Planning and Zoning.

Ramsey Homes. Excerpt from "Precast Concrete in Wartime Building", *The Architectural Record*: vol. 91, issue 3, March 1942. Courtesy of the Alexandria Department of Planning and Zoning.



Delos H. Smith, FAIA (1884-1963), of Smith, Werner and Billings Architects, was a well-known architectural historian and ecclesiastical and civic architect who generally worked in more traditional styles. Notable works of his include the U.S. Capitol Prayer Room, the Montgomery County Courthouse in Rockville, MD and the rebuilding of St. Paul's Episcopal Church Rock Creek. Smith developed two schemes for this site. The first scheme, from July 1941, included two quadplexes flanking a small two-story apartment building with wood-frame buildings clad in shiplap siding. The second scheme with three quadplexes and one triplex, from November 1941, specified "masonry concrete block" and proposed "Fabcrete Units" as an alternate. An article published in *The Architectural Record* in 1942 described the experimental use of precast slabs for wartime construction and mentioned two projects in Alexandria, one of which was likely Ramsey Homes.

The plans included two elevations at each building: entrance door elevations and living room elevations. This allowed each quadplex to read as a duplex at each entrance door elevation with two front doors and small porches on each front and with walkways leading to courtyards and the sidewalk. The design also allowed each unit to function as a corner unit to provide substantial light and ventilation. A children's play area was located at the inset of the triplex. All units had a hexagonal clothes line described as a "Yard Clothes

Dryer". The buildings had a minimalist modern design, in stark contrast to many other buildings in Old Town Alexandria. Originally designed with flat roofs with monitors and little ornamentation, the buildings contrasted with the more common Colonial Revival red brick garden apartments constructed throughout the Washington, DC, region before and during World War II. A revision to the design replaced the central monitors, over the four bathrooms, with simpler skylights. The plans also included a design for a plaque that read

"THESE HOMES WERE BUILT BY THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES FOR THE DEFENDERS OF THIS NATION, Franklin D. Roosevelt, President, by United States Housing Authority for Federal Works Agency."

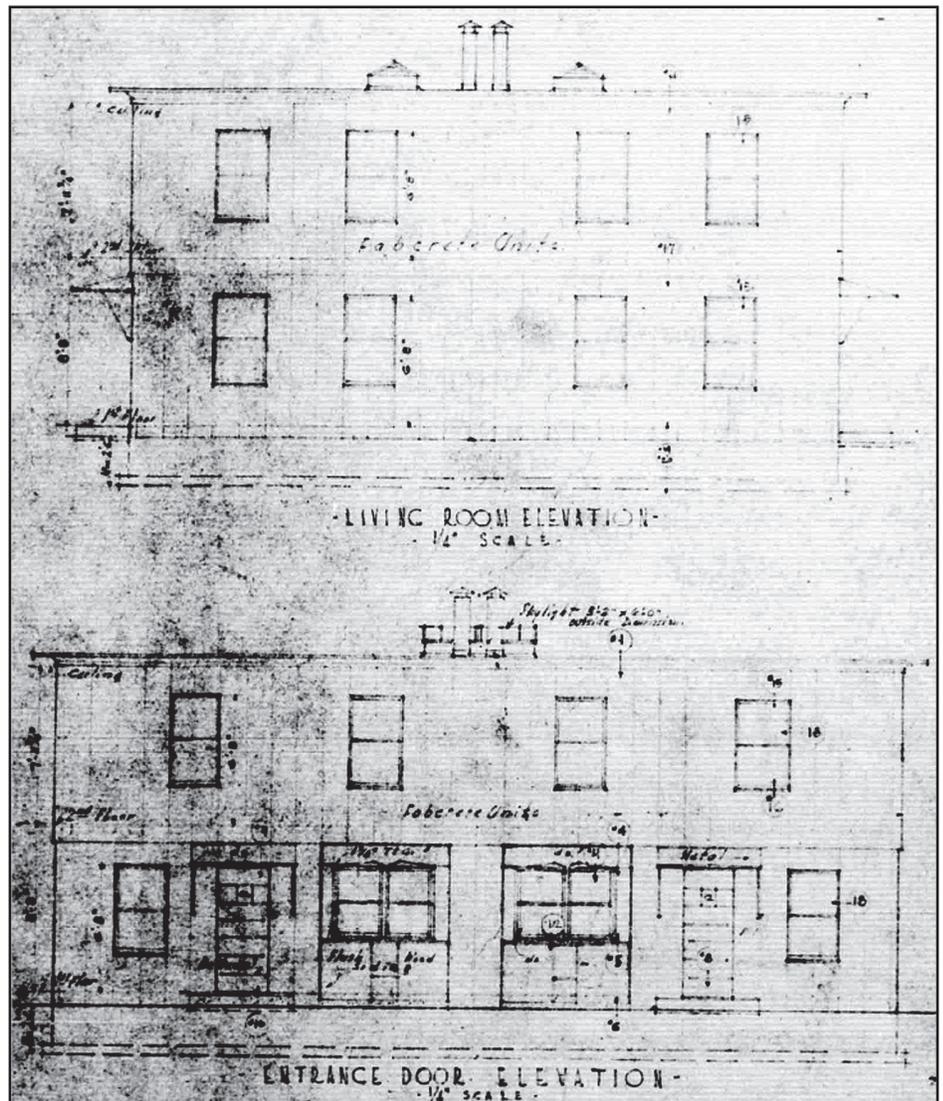
The buildings were innovative in that they were constructed of prefabricated concrete panels known as "Fabcrete." "Fabcrete" was a pre-cast unit of cementitious material that did not require interior framework for support and to which composition board, laths, and other material could be attached to achieve desired finishes. Joseph E. Hines of the Fabcrete Corporation, Richmond, Virginia applied for its patent on March 4, 1939, Serial No. 259,885. The choice of this material and the modern design reflected the experimental aspect of this small housing project.

In 1953, the Federal Public Housing Authority divested many properties and the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority acquired this site. Alterations were made throughout the years, most notably the removal of the modernist flat roof and the addition of a hipped roof around 1963. In 1995, the buildings underwent a Colonial Revival renovation with the addition of shutters and door and window changes.

The Parker-Gray Board of Architectural Review (BAR) denied a request to demolish the buildings in April 2015, finding the buildings to be culturally and architecturally significant. On appeal, Alexandria City Council overturned the BAR's decision and approved demolition of the buildings in September 2015. The buildings will be/were demolished in spring 2018 and a four-story, 53-unit public housing project will be constructed on the site.

All reports and information related to the history and redevelopment of this site can be found at <http://www.vhdlc.us/ramsey-homes.html>.

Ramsey Homes. Front elevation of quadplexes by Delos Smith of Smith, Werner and Billings, Oct. 10, 1941. Courtesy of the Alexandria Department of Planning and Zoning.



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Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Virginia Cultural Resource Information System (V-CRIS) Architectural Survey forms.

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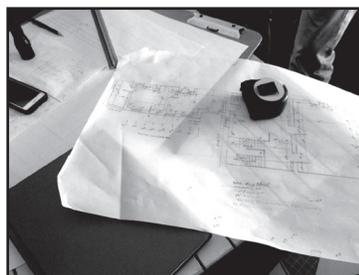
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Notes

